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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE WAR IN BOSNIA

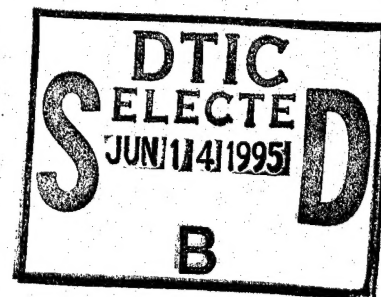
BY

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USAWC STRATEGIC RESEARCH PROJECT

THE WAR IN BOSNIA

by

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide senior military leaders and policymakers and those deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina for the first time an insight into the people, the events that led to the war, the positions of the warring parties, and the issues that divide them.

When I deployed to Sarajevo in April 1994, I knew little of the history, the culture or even the geography of the place. I subsequently discovered that virtually everyone who comes to the region as a peacekeeper, journalist, humanitarian aid worker, or even a policymaker knows little about the core issues or the participants' perceptions of the situation. I wrote this paper to force myself to learn more about what was happening and to provide others with some insights from a field perspective.

Due to the security situation, most visitors to Bosnia stay only a short time; the very few American officers and NCOs assigned to Bosnia-Herzegovina Command stay three months or less. All but the very top UNPROFOR commanders rotate at six-month intervals and many UN military personnel stay only three. In the two months I was in Sarajevo, I know of no visiting parliamentarian who stayed in the city overnight, dozens never left the airport. I mention this not to criticize the people who came — their governments and the UN lay down tough restrictions out of concern for their safety — but to point out how difficult it is for accurate information to be developed and passed on to policy-makers.

The issues in Bosnia are complex and hard to understand without extensive reading on the subject — something that is difficult to do since the literature in English is scattered, fragmentary, and hard to find on the scene. Much has been written about Yugoslavia in general, the Serbs and, to a lesser extent, the Croats. But little exists on Bosnia *per se*, and

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the Muslims who live there.

Perhaps the hardest concept to convey is the position of the Bosnians in this war. They have been mislabeled, misunderstood and, ultimately, misled (by the West). The issues are very complex and I do not pretend to completely understand them, but after my assignment in Bosnia I have come to some conclusions. This paper is written from the perspective of someone in the field, based in Sarajevo, with limited experience in Central Bosnia.

With little likelihood of peace through diplomacy, I have limited my discussion of options to end the war to the military proposals. This in no way implies that diplomatic efforts should cease. On the contrary, I believe every effort must continue to be made to bring about a political solution to the war. After three years, however, all diplomatic efforts have failed.

A word of caution. Some readers may conclude that the paper appears to be too pro-Bosnian, others that it is anti-Serb and anti-Croat. To be certain, I believe that the Bosnians have been the principal victims in this war and the preponderance of guilt falls on the Serbs and to an extent, the Croats. But I have striven to be objective, despite presenting and interpreting events from a personal perspective. I made many friends on all sides of the conflict and find that the saddest part of this war is that most of the people have been forced by circumstance into a fight that few wanted and even less understand. The politicians and leaders of all sides have a lot to answer for.

YUGOSLAVIA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR

"I hate the corpses of empires, they stink as nothing else."

REBECCA WEST, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR ORIGINS

The roots of the current Balkan War run deep, and they will continue to shape and influence its outcome. Perhaps more than any other region of Europe, the history of struggles past is revered, retold, and relived. As a result, the traditions of violence and reprisals, embellished by myth and spread by propaganda, shape perceptions and events. Truth is usually buried by lies, lies become truth, prophecies of doom and martyrdom are self-fulfilled. Thus, to comprehend the violence of this war, one must understand the history of the lands that would form the heartland of what became, if only for a brief time, Yugoslavia — Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia.

Pushed out of eastern Europe by the Avars, Slavs crossed the Danube in 527, and for the next forty years moved progressively to the Adriatic. In 610, the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius permitted two Slav tribes — the Croats and the Serbs — to settle on Byzantine territory south of the Danube in what is today Croatia and Serbia. The newcomers acknowledged *de jure* Byzantine sovereignty over the territory, but for practical purposes they remained autonomous.¹

The Serbs and Early Serbia

The first signs of Serbian unity appeared under the aegis of King Stephan Nemanja (1165-1196), who passed into legend as the unifier of the Serbs. The concept of unity has remained a most powerful icon in Serbian mythology: if united, the Serbs would be subject

to no one. This myth is the rallying call of current Serb nationalists, who use it to justify aggression against peoples in areas outside Serbia's present borders, as well as for subjugating non-ethnic Serbs within those boundaries. Its most dangerous manifestation is contained in the quest for "Greater Serbia," a state that encompasses all areas where ethnic Serbs live — including many only recently occupied by Serbs (e.g. Vojvodina) and others where only a very few still reside (e.g. Kosovo). Moreover, the idea of a "Greater Serbia" relates to lands which have specific historical meaning -- either through the semimythical origins of Serbian nationhood (e.g. the Battle of Kosovo) or association with the Serbian Orthodox church. Finally, many nationalists claim for modern Serbia the territorial boundaries achieved under Stefan Dushan, which includes modern day Bulgaria.²

Early Croatia

The Croats settled first in the hinterland of Zadar, Sibenik, and Split, where they gradually adopted Roman Catholicism. The Croats were also farmers; they stayed in the countryside while Romans — traders and craftsmen — stayed in the cities. The two cultures, though different in origin, language and religion, gradually melded, with the Croats adopting many Roman customs. From this union, Trpimir founded the first Croatian state in 845, encompassing Zadar, Trogir, and Split. In 1069, Dalmatia and Croatia joined to form the "Regnum Dalmatiae et Croatiae." Croatian independence ended in 1102 when they were henceforth subjugated to Hungary under the Pacta Coventa.

Bosnia

Bosnia is a relative late-comer, first established as a political entity in the thirteenth century. By the fourteenth century, Bosnia had become an important political and economic

factor in the region. During the reign of King Tvrtko I, Bosnia became the strongest south Slav state encompassing all of what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina plus Raska, Dalmatia, Croatia, and some of the Adriatic islands (Hvar, Brać).

Throughout this period, Bosnia was the site of clashes between Rome and Byzantium. It belonged to both empires at various times, but was on the periphery of both, within their scope of interest but too distant to be completely assimilated. Among its unique elements were two distinct religions, the Bogomils and the Bosnian church, and three alphabets: Greek, Latin, and "Bosanćica," a Bosnian alphabet. Art of the period reflects elements belonging to Byzantium and the Roman-Gothic school. A union in diversity — that was Bosnia.³

OTTOMAN RULE

Two further events shaped the ethnopolitical makeup of the region: the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia and the subsequent creation of Serb-settled military frontiers in what is now southern and eastern Croatia. By 1354, the Ottomans, pushing westward from Turkey, had gained a foothold on European soil and were threatening Constantinople. As the Ottomans moved into the Balkans, only the Serbs provided any significant opposition. A Serbian lord, Lazar, gathered other Christian lords around him and confronted the Ottomans. The two armies clashed at Kosovo on Saint Vitus's Day, 28 June 1389. The Ottomans defeated the Serbs, killing Lazar and thousands of his followers. Even though Murad, the Ottoman sultan, died in the battle, a feat greatly revered in Serb legend, the outcome was not altered: an independent Serbia disappeared.⁴

To this day, Serbs celebrate Saint Vitus's Day, *Vidovdan*, as the day they stood and

fell together — unity was all they could salvage from the event. Today, *Vidovdan* and Kosovo serve as mythical symbols of Serbian unity⁵, and of the self-perceived tragedy of Serbian destiny. More importantly, *Vidovdan* represents a recurring vow that never again will the Serbs be shamed. Using these symbols and words, Slobodan Milošević, the current president of Serbia, stirred up nationalistic fervor on the six hundredth anniversary of the battle in 1389 that led directly to the current war.⁶

The Ottomans required another century to cross the Drina River into the wild mountains of Bosnia. By the end of the fifteenth century, when the Ottomans consolidated their control, a slow process of Islamization began. Islamization resulted neither from forced conversion, nor from Ottoman colonization. Instead, large numbers of Bosnian Slavs converted largely because of socioeconomic factors: employment in the Ottoman civil service, fiscal, and land tenure benefits available to Muslims.⁷ Another factor is that many Slavs belonged to the Bogomil⁸ branch of Christianity, which Catholics and Orthodox cruelly persecuted.

The Ottoman conquest of Bosnia, and the subsequent conversion of a large fraction of the population to Islam deep in the European heartland, proved a defining moment in the history of the region. For the next five hundred years, Turkish power reigned supreme. The Turks ruled with an iron fist, suppressing rebellions without quarter, and frequently using gratuitous violence to intimidate the people.⁹

The harshness of the Turkish dominance of the region left a lingering animosity against Muslims, but additional factors contributed to intolerance. First, the Muslims were identified with the hated Turks. It wasn't so much that Bosnian Muslims were considered

Turks, but rather that they had abandoned their Slavic roots and collaborated with the Ottomans. Second, was religion. Large numbers of Christians surrounded the Bosnian Muslims, and an era not known for religious tolerance -- even the two branches of Christianity often fought over doctrinal differences -- naturally generated resentment. Third, religious differences exacerbated the social and economic domination that Muslims exerted over poorer Croats and Serbs. Slavs who converted to Islam were largely city dwellers, and indeed, to this day, the majority live in Bosnia's cities and towns. They were the artisans, the entrepreneurs, the merchants, and, most important, the civil servants who upheld the authority of the Sublime Porte in the mountainous, western fringes of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰ They were the major landowners, the *begs* (from the Turkish *bey*, lord), while the Serbs and the Croats were the *kmets*, impoverished peasants subject to feudal obligations to the *begs*.¹¹

The Krajina

Equally important for future events was the establishment of military frontiers populated by Serb settlers on the borders between Croatia and Bosnia -- in effect, the border between the Latin and Byzantine Churches of Christendom and Islam, between Eastern and Western culture. With the Turks' defeat outside Vienna in 1683, the border between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires stabilized roughly along the borders of present-day Bosnia. To stem further Ottoman thrusts and protect the coast, the Habsburgs enlisted the services of Serb populations who had retreated westward following a failed revolt against the Sublime Porte in the late seventeenth century.¹² Hungarian Emperor Leopold I allowed the Serbs to enter his kingdom and granted them a degree of self-government and religious freedom. In

return, the Serbs assumed the task of guarding the Vojna Krajina, or military frontier, from Turkish incursions. Due to the military nature of their settlements, the Serbs dealt directly with the government in Vienna, thus skirting the authorities in Zagreb (who were then under the control of the Habsburgs) and avoiding the usual feudal obligations to Croatian lords.¹³

These conditions encouraged the Serbs to colonize the Krajina. The main frontier areas were in the stark mountains above the Dalmatian Coast, around the western tip of the Ottoman territory — now western Bosnia — and in eastern Slavonia, around the town of Vukovar. Today, these areas are the main confrontation zones between Serbs and Croats. A look at the Krajina of the Habsburgs and the United Nations Protected Areas of 1992 illustrates how this area has maintained its character (See Map 1). Within the Krajina Serbs, a fierce, independent-minded, tradition was kindled, born of their determination to preserve their autonomy and to carry out their responsibilities as the citizen-soldier guardians of the frontier. This determination survives today, characterized by a fascination with arms and a tradition of military service.¹⁴

The Serbs' favorable situation aroused resentment and fear on the part of the Croats. The economic and social contrast between the stern Krajina populations in their equally stern mountain environment and the commercial, more mundane populations of the Dalmatian Coast and Croatian towns set the foundations for the present-day conflict.¹⁵

THE RISE OF SLAV NATIONALISM

The geopolitical basis for the present conflicts surfaced in the mid-nineteenth century when a wave of nationalism surged over the peoples of the Balkans. Several factors contributed to the birth of these movements. It quickly became apparent that there were two

alternatives for budding Slav nationalism. The first focused on creating individual states composed of distinct ethnic groups within the region: (e.g. Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bulgarians, Macedonians, and Albanians). The second called for the unification of all "south Slavs" in a single nation. Within the pan-Slavic movement, several often contradictory paths existed. Some factions sought to bring together Serbs and Bulgarians, while others hoped to assemble the Slav peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Alternatively, the "Illyrian movement," founded in the 1840s by Ljudevit Gaj, a Croat, sought eventually to unify Habsburg Slavs with the Serbs in an "Illyrian" state. In the short term, however, they were willing to settle for an autonomous Slav region within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Finally, Josep Strossmayer, a Croatian bishop, sought in the 1860s to unite Serbs and Croats in the land of southern Slavs, or Yugoslavia.¹⁶

In 1867, the Austrian Empire became a dual monarchy, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with power shared administratively between Vienna and Budapest. While this initiative attempted to quiet the Magyar separatist problem in Hungary, it did little to address the aspirations of other nationalities. In fact, the *Ausgleich* exacerbated nationalistic tensions in the empire, because the notion of the supra-national character of the former Austrian Empire had been perceived as a source of protection against Hungary.¹⁷

As a result, nascent Croatian nationalism grew. In response, the Austro-Hungarian government decided in 1868 to renew the *Pacta Conventa* of 1102 in a more modern form called the *Nagodba*. But southern Slav nationalists rejected the new agreement and intensified their calls for a regionally based state that reflected nine centuries of Croatian political, economic, and cultural hegemony over Slavonia, the Dalmatian Coast, Western

Herzegovina, and parts of Bosnia, thus assuming the lead role in the new state.¹⁸

Serb nationalists, on the other hand, wanted to unite the southern Slavs under Serbian hegemony, with the Serbo-Croat language defining which peoples, Catholic Croats, Muslim Bosnians, Orthodox Montenegrins, should be included in a Serbian "nation." The Serbian entity would play an "anchoring" role in the new state and promote unification of all Serbs living in neighboring regions. For them, the main concern of an independent Serbia, outside its own borders, would be to protect ethnic Serbs living under foreign rule and attempt to gather them together. The Yugoslav idea was secondary and was understood in terms of "Greater Serbia." To achieve their ends, the Serbs turned to armed rebellion. In 1804, they revolted against the Turks. Though the Serbs were defeated in 1813, the Turks were in a period of decline and were forced to begin loosening their hold over Serbia. Backed by the Austrians, Serbia became a quasi-independent kingdom under Milan Obrenovic. Bosnia, however, remained under Ottoman rule.¹⁹

The Rise of Serb and Croat Nationalism in Bosnia

When rebellions against the Ottomans began, Catholic and Orthodox Bosnians began to identify themselves as Croats and Serbs and began thinking of Croatia and Serbia as their homelands. Prior to this period, the people regarded themselves as "Bosnians" of different faiths.²⁰

Serb nationalism and the concept of all-Serb unity came to Bosnia when the Ottomans granted Serbia autonomy in 1817. Shortly thereafter, Serbs came to Bosnia to enlist Orthodox Christians in the cause, a relatively easy task, as the concept of a country without ruling *begs* and *janissaries* (semi-independent and frequently ill-disciplined soldiers) attracted

the long-suffering Serb peasants. The Orthodox church also played a major role in spreading the concept of a "Greater Serbia." A strong merchant class which had developed among Bosnian Serbs gave financial support to traveling priests and their nationalist message.²¹

Concomitantly, some Bosnian Catholics began to identify themselves as Croats, although this concept grew more slowly and less intensely. The movement was centered in Herzegovina, which had many cultural and economic ties with nearby Dalmatia and was away from Central Bosnia and the Franciscans who advocated a Bosnian state.²²

Muslims remained "the odd man out." They had no identity other than as a religious group. While called "Turks" by their neighbors, they had no direct tie to the Ottomans. An 1855 report by Massieur de Clerval to the French minister of public affairs noted:

"Between their Orthodox and Catholic neighbors, who consider them as defectors and heretics, and the Osmanlis who consider them as incomplete Turks, the Muslims live in sad isolation. Turks from Istanbul consider them as barbarians because they do not have the culture that the Ottomans are proud of. They are making fun of them, as they cannot pronounce correctly the Arabic words in their prayers."²³

Tensions between the various national movements occurred against the backdrop of political upheaval in Bosnia. As long as Turkish power had remained supreme, the power of the local *begs* had been secure. As Ottoman power diminished and neighboring empires became more powerful, the divisions in Bosnia intensified and became explosive. The Ottomans initially tried to keep their empire together by liberalizing the laws, but this undercut local Muslim administrators and led to a series of local revolts to defend their privileges against the Porte, which finally defeated in 1850.

The position of peasants in Bosnia was appalling, as Christians and Muslims alike

paid oppressive taxes to local *begs*. At the same time, the idea of Slav nationalism, in all its variations, surfaced in Croat and Serb populations. By this time, Christian peasants in Bosnia could be assured of support from nearby countries in any rebellion. Another uprising in 1875, originated near Mostar in response to attempts to collect taxes after widespread crop failures. The Bosnian Muslims, acting as agents of the Ottoman government, carried out the levies. This exacerbated the existing animosity between Muslims and Serbs. The Muslims continued to resist Ottoman moves toward reform in order to protect their status as the dominant class in the province. Thus, when the uprising occurred, it was bloody and violent. The following lines, taken from an earlier history of the Balkans, sound hauntingly like the situation in 1993. The author notes that the rebels were strengthened by:

"Volunteers from neighboring Serb areas were equipped with rifles and ammunition which filtered across the border... (Moreover,)

The cabinets of the great powers did not fail to see the dangerous implications of the Bosnian rising. They negotiated busily among themselves.

In their own minds [Montenegrins and Serbs] they were about to strike a blow not only on behalf of their Serb countrymen still in Turkish bondage, but also for that ultimate goal of extreme Serb nationalism, the restoration by conquest of the wide empire of Tsar Stefan Dushan."²⁴

AUSTRIAN INTERVENTION

But this was not to be. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the Habsburgs placed Bosnia and the neighboring province of Herzegovina under their protection, largely on the pretext of economic inequality between the *kmets*, the mostly Christian peasants, and the Muslim ruling classes. Hungary, intent on ensuring that Bosnia would fall under neither Serb nor Croatian administration, supported Austrian military intervention to control the region.

Austrian occupation of the region proved difficult and resistance fueled nationalist movements throughout the Balkans, the Yugoslav group especially. Once Austria incorporated the province into the Dual Monarchy, the government decided that Bosnia would be self-financing. Taxes rose significantly. While public administration and infrastructure improved, advances did not substantially improve the lot of peasant taxpayers and discontent rose among ethnic Serbs and Croats. Austria's failure to respond to Croatian demands: attachment of Bosnia to Croatia, annexation of the part of Rijeka, and dissolution of the military frontier and the Serbs' special status there increased nationalist tensions.²⁵ And, in more than an interesting aside, these aims are similar to those of the contemporary Croatian state.

The loss of Bosnia marked an important step in the Ottoman Empire's retreat from Europe. As attempts at authoritarian reform under Sultan Abdul Hamid failed, the Turks' military and economic fragility were exposed. The independent Balkan nations, such as Greece and Bulgaria, began to covet the Ottoman's remaining possessions in Europe, essentially Albania, Macedonia and Thrace, and to make plans to take them. The result was the First Balkan War, in 1912.²⁶

THE BALKAN WARS

The war pitted an alliance of Greece, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Serbia against the Ottoman Empire. While victorious, the alliance quickly fractured as the victors fought over the division of Macedonia. In 1913, the Second Balkan War flared up, and Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania, and the Turks attacked Bulgaria. In the end, Bulgaria was crushed, Albania was established, and Macedonia was partitioned. Serbia, which gained the Sandžak

of Novi Pazar (partitioned between Serbia and Montenegro) and Greece, which obtained most of Thrace, were the great victors. The Turks regained a foothold on European soil, mostly at the expense of Bulgaria.²⁷

The Serbs' success in the war fueled Slav nationalism. As the main victor in both the Balkan Wars, Serbia became the rising power in the region. Moreover, because of its location, the Great Powers courted Serbia, seeking to reinforce their geostrategic interests in the Balkans. Russia sought access to the warm seas and felt kinship with fellow Slavs in Serbia and Montenegro. Britain pursued the two major tenets of its foreign policy: to protect the route to India and prevent Continental hegemony. The Germans tried to strengthen their Berlin-Istanbul axis, at the expense of France and Russia. The French wanted to counter the central European power of Germany and Austro-Hungary. Thus, Serbia was seen by the Western powers, France in particular, as an ally against the Central Powers.²⁸

WORLD WAR I

As a result of this tangled web of alliances and counteralliances, the assassination of the Austrian crown prince Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 at the hand of a Bosnian Serb nationalist triggered the First World War. The assassin, Gavrilo Princip, whose footsteps that fateful day were marked on the Sarajevo pavement until recently, was a Bosnian Serb who had never accepted that Austrian rule could replace that of the hated Turks.²⁹ The crown prince's visit to Sarajevo on the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 proved to be too strong a provocation for the fanatical Serbian nationalist to ignore.

THE FORMATION OF YUGOSLAVIA

During World War I, Serbia fought with the Allies. Almost a quarter of its population perished from wounds, starvation, and disease.³⁰ But Serbian suffering aroused sufficient sympathy from the victorious Allies to give the Serbs the necessary leverage to win considerable territorial concessions at the peace talks. In the best Balkan tradition, the Serbs elevated their sufferings to legend and used them to lay the basis for their claims to southern Slav hegemony in the postwar period.³¹

In the aftermath of World War I, three groups, whose aspirations were crucial to understanding how the Yugoslav idea was realized, became the central players in the political arena:

- The first was the Serbian government. Its goals were the formation of "Greater Serbia;" territorial continuity, in particular annexation of Bosnia; and an outlet to the sea.
- The second were Croatian and Slovenian national leaders. They favored a tripartite arrangement among Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia.
- The third was the Yugoslav Committee. They based their work on the Dalmatian rapprochement of 1905 and worked for a unification of all the south Slavs, i.e., the Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. The south Slav movement was helped by fears among all three nationalities of growing Italian power and imperialism.³²

Interestingly, in the discussions of the period, there was little mention of the Muslims, either as a nationality or as a religion. Nor was there much reference to Montenegrins, Albanians, or Macedonians.

In October 1918, as World War I came to an end, a national council was formed in Zagreb to establish a new government. Mostly as a reaction to threats from their neighbors, the committee proclaimed "the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" — the first

Yugoslav state — in December 1918.

The new state was precarious at best. Two factors contributed to its weak situation. Militarily, its neighbors bitterly contested its borders. But more important, the constituent nationalities strongly disagreed about the fundamental makeup of the new state and the powers of the central government. Croats wanted a decentralized structure similar to their experience during the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Serbs viewed themselves as the liberators of the south Slavs and maneuvered to monopolize military and political power in the new kingdom. Slovene objectives were less clear, but as they emerged from political obscurity, they hoped to achieve a more distinct sense of national identity, comparable to that of the Serbs or the Croats. Bosnians, particularly Muslims, were generally ignored.³³

At the heart of these issues rested a fundamental imperfection in the new kingdom: it was essentially an extension of the Serbian state. Most of the political and economic power was concentrated in Belgrade, and Serbs held most of the consequential positions in the kingdom; thus sowing the seeds of future discontent.³⁴

The politics of the era only exacerbated the problem. Parties that essentially represented each nationality vied for power and influence, but when they talked of constitutional reform, they were subjected to repression. Following the killing of Stjepan Radić, the head of the Croatian Peasant party, in 1928 by a Montenegrin radical, the situation deteriorated, and in 1929 King Alexander I declared a royal dictatorship, suspended the constitution, dissolved parliament, and banned all political parties. But, while initially well-received, the royal dictatorship did not resolve the festering nationality problems. Rather it gave birth to violent irredentism between Croats and Serbs, Serbs and Slovenes,

and increased national aspirations in Kosovo and Macedonia. The assassination of King Alexander I at the hands of a Croat nationalist in Marseilles in 1934 exacerbated tensions. The new regent loosened the reins and allowed a modicum of freedom to return. However, the nationality issue continued to dominate political life, notably under the form of Orthodox-Catholic opposition.³⁵

THE RISE OF FASCISM

At the end of the 1930s, external events began to overshadow internal developments. The rise of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, which had designs on Istria and the Dalmatian Coast, worried everyone in Yugoslavia. Serbs and Croats quickly realized that relations would have to be strengthened if the country was to survive. Both parties made uncustomary compromises. However, the *Anschluss* of Germany and Austria in March 1938 and Italian support to Croat nationalist groups, especially Ante Pavelić's Ustaša movement, undermined cooperation.³⁶

In the months preceding the outbreak of war in Europe, Germany made increasingly insistent demands on Yugoslavia to join the Tripartite Pact, or the Axis. The Axis Powers, acting in concert with local Fascists, pressured Belgrade into acquiescing to the creation of an autonomous Croat province, the *Banovina Hrvatska*. The circumstances surrounding the agreement were similar to the 1848 *Ausgleich* between Austria and Hungary and somewhat like the dispositions governing relations between Zagreb and Vienna throughout previous centuries. This heightened Serbian apprehensions of international "meddling" and suspicions of Croatian "treason" lingered.³⁷

WORLD WAR II

War broke out in Europe in 1939. The Italians demanded Yugoslav concessions. The monarchy, hoping to stave off a war, appeased the Fascists. The Germans, in an attempt to shore up the southern flank of their attack on Russia, demanded that Yugoslavia join the Axis. The Regent, hoping to stave off German aggression, finally agreed. The people did not, and the army immediately toppled his government. Hitler furiously ordered an immediate invasion. In April 1941, the Germans attacked. The Yugoslav army collapsed in a matter of hours. The fact that Croat and Slovenian units, many of whose officers were German sympathizers, did not fight as hard as Serb and Montenegrin ones accelerated the collapse, and the Yugoslav state paid for not addressing the national issues. The young King Paul, who had participated in the coup against the regent, fled to London and established a government in exile.³⁸

The Germans aimed to extract maximum resources, while tying down as few men as possible. To this end they supported two puppet regimes, one in Serbia under Marshall Milan Nedić and the other, particularly repressive, in Croatia under Ante Pavelić. The Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and Pavelić's Ustaša movement unleashed a reign of terror that killed hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Muslims,³⁹ and others, including Croats who resisted Fascists. The ruthlessness of the repression drove many Croats to join the ranks of the various Yugoslav resistance movements.

In addition to creating the two puppet states, Germany annexed northern Slovenia and administered the Banat region (the part of Vojvodina east of the Tisa River). Italy annexed southern Slovenia, the Dalmatian Coast, a number of islands and parts of coastal Montenegro

(the Istrian Peninsula was already Italian). Bulgaria annexed most of Macedonia, while Italian sponsored Albania took over the remainder, as well as the Kosovo region. Hungary received territories in eastern Slovenia and western Vojvodina "lost" after World War I.

Two resistance groups rose up to fight the occupying powers. The first was the Četniks⁴⁰ of Colonel Draža Mihajlović, a former officer in the Royal Yugoslav Army who took to the hills immediately after the German invasion and the ensuing debacle. The Četnik movement drew on the centuries-old Serbian peasant tradition of resistance to foreign occupation. The guerrillas were for the most part rural peasants led by officers from the former royal army, which had been largely staffed by Serbs and Montenegrins. The movement was decentralized with a myriad of largely independent groups with autonomous local commanders.⁴¹

The other resistance movement, the Partisans, was highly organized. Led by Josip Broz (known as Tito), a Croatian, the Partisans were based on the structures of the prewar Communist party, which had been outlawed under the monarchy. Because of their allegiance to Moscow and Stalin's initial cooperation with Hitler, the Partisans were slow to mobilize and take the field against their occupiers. The Partisans only began effective resistance after Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941. Because of this, the Partisans were initially scorned by the Allies and the other resistance groups.⁴²

When the Partisans finally joined the fray, they and the Četniks fought the Germans together. However, after the first, ferocious reprisals against the civilian population, a rift developed between the two. Mihajlović, who was essentially a Serb nationalist, never trusted Tito's revolutionary, pan-Slavic antecedents. Furthermore, he was staggered by the vicious

Nazis reprisals against the civilian and largely ethnic Serbian population. Fearing that the reprisals would alienate the people toward his movement, he held back. (He also feared that the reprisals would stamp out Serbian nationalism before he could adequately organize.) The Partisans, however, were determined to fight the enemy wherever and whenever possible -- regardless of the costs. A meeting between the two leaders in Užice in Serbia did not resolve the differences. Soon the two sides were fighting each other. The Germans and Italians exploited the division and courted the Četniks. Thus, in slowly increasing cases, Četnik detachments fought alongside Axis forces. Thus, Yugoslavia was ravaged by two wars in the 1941-45 years: a war against the outside enemy and a three-way civil war, between the Partisans, Ustaša, and Četniks.⁴³

Initially, the Četniks enjoyed the support of the London-based government in exile, as well as that of the British. However, in 1942, reports began reaching Churchill that Tito's forces were the ones inflicting the most casualties on the Germans and their allies. British liaison officers parachuted in to meet with the Partisans and, as a result of their reports, the Allies switched their aid from the Četniks to Tito. The Allies sent a large number of liaison officers to coordinate arms shipments, air support, and intelligence sharing. In 1943, the Declaration of the Tehran Conference between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin expressly named the Partisans as an Allied army while not mentioning Mihajlović's Četniks.⁴⁴

THE FOUNDING OF THE COMMUNIST STATE

In 1942, the Partisans created an underground interim government, the Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ). At the end of 1944, Partisan

and Soviet troops liberated Belgrade. Tito and his movement became the main actors in postwar Yugoslavia. They set up a federation and established a federal structure of republics based on national lines, the main nationalities being the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, and Macedonians (Muslims, interestingly, did not receive recognition until 1974). The new state also guaranteed minority rights, abolished the monarchy, and established the supremacy of the Communist party.⁴⁵

One of Tito's key aims was to end the conflict between the Serbs and the Croats.⁴⁶ To do this, Serbian hegemony had to be overcome. To that end, the territory of the Republic of Serbia was reduced by creating two "autonomous provinces," Vojvodina and Kosovo. More importantly, Tito's government established the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (B-H) to serve as a buffer state between Serbia and Croatia.

Yugoslav politics took a dramatic turn in 1948. After two years of verbal sparring with the Soviets, the Cominform expelled Yugoslavia. This move that shook not only Yugoslavia, but also the entire Communist movement, and defined Yugoslavian politics for the next forty years. First, it shook the polity from the Partisan years (General Arso Jovanović, the Partisan chief of staff, was shot by border guards while trying to escape arrest by Tito for siding with the Soviets). Second, the perceived threat of an impending Soviet invasion brought the country together and helped heal, if only superficially, the wounds of the war years. Third, it strengthened Tito's hold on power. The rift with Moscow forced Tito to turn westward, at a time the West was beginning to establish its move to contain communism under the Truman Doctrine. Tito quickly became a master at playing the game and to survive developed a political and economic system — called self-management — that

followed the same pattern. Yugoslavia became an odd mix of socialism and capitalism, a modernizing nation torn between East and West.⁴⁷

EVENTS LEADING TO DISSOLUTION OF THE COUNTRY

Tito died in 1980. He had presided over the unification and reconciliation of the southern Slavs, at least temporarily, and the birth of the second Yugoslavia. However, at his death, many problems remained unresolved. Particularly nettlesome was the problem of succession: none of Tito's potential successors could lay claim to the loyalties of the different nationalities or could unify the country in the same way he had done.

But more importantly, old nationalistic aspirations, divisions, and animosities had not been extinguished. Significantly, Serbs and Croats continued to vie for prominence over the other republics in the federation. Economic disparities exacerbated tensions, which Serbs, Montenegrins, and Macedonians increasingly interpreted as ethnic-based. Moreover, Serbs and Montenegrins gradually concentrated power in their hands. Serb nationalists began to voice concern over how their ethnic population had been partitioned off into regions where their power was diluted — nearly four million of the eight to nine million Serbs were living in other republics (there were twenty million Yugoslavs in 1980). Tension simmered in Kosovo, where riots had broken out in 1969 between Serbs and the ethnic Albanians. The Serbs also worried about their ethnic brethren populations in Croatia. Nationalist divisions in each republic began to undercut the unity of the country.⁴⁸

The 1974 constitution, which Tito had promulgated to end ethnic divisions, may have exacerbated nationalist aspirations. The central government felt it could no longer suppress the emerging nationalism of the early 1970s and therefore tried to institutionalize it. The

result was an unworkable system where every republic had a right to veto key legislation.

The stage was set for the political disintegration of the country.⁴⁹

The seminal event that led to the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation was the dissolution of the Communist party. As communism crumbled in Eastern Europe, so did the League of Yugoslav Communists (LCY), in Tito's own words the "connective tissue which binds socialist Yugoslavia together." (Tito 1972) The demise of Communism ushered in a rash of nationalist ideologies espoused by former Communists turned nationalists.

Slobodan Milošević, President of Serbia, was the first to rise to prominence. The archetypical communist apparatchik, he rose steadily in the late Tito years. In 1987, he began fanning Serbian nationalism by pointing out that Serbia was the most powerful, yet among the least prosperous, republics of the federation. He built on Serbs' fears of being minorities in areas where they traditionally predominated. In a series of bizarre speeches, backed by proclamations of nationalistic groups in Belgrade,⁵⁰ Milošević whipped up fears that Serbs in Kosovo, who had been outnumbered by ethnic Albanians in the centuries since the Battle of Kosovo, were being repressed by the Muslims there. Trouble brewed and, in 1989; riots in Kosovo broke out and were brutally put down by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA). Milosevic also promoted legislation that curbed the autonomous status of Kosovo and Vojvodina. The same year, on 28 June, Milošević led one million Serbs in commemorating the mythical Battle of Kosovo that had occurred six hundred years earlier. He used the event to proclaim the unity of the Serb people. Thenceforth the Serb rallying cry, "only unity can save the Serbs" — illustrated by four Cyrillic "Cs" clustered on the axis of a cross — became the byword for the Serb nationalist movement. These were strange words from someone

who supposedly aspired to be the leader of all citizens of Yugoslavia.⁵¹

The sentiments that Milošević unleashed in his bid for power undermined Yugoslavia's Prime Minister Ante Marković who, from 1989 to 1991, implemented the most innovative reform packages seen to date in Eastern Europe. At the same time, the fervent Serb nationalism worried the other ethnic groups, and fears of growing Serb militancy gave rise to other nationalistic movements throughout the state. For example, Slovenes and Croats were determined not to come under Serb domination. Each had its own nascent but growing secessionist movements that saw secession as the key to leaving Communism and reorienting their politics and economies toward Europe. Pressures to quit the federation were strongest in Slovenia and Croatia. At the XIV Congress of the LCY, held in Belgrade in January 1990, first Slovenia and then Croatia abandoned the proceedings. For all intents and purposes, the federal structure of the Yugoslav Communist party had ceased to exist, and with it the Yugoslav state.⁵²

The Outbreak of Fighting

Yugoslavia managed to hold together for another eighteen months. Slovenia and Croatia backed the central government, and by extension Serbia, in its repression of Kosovo. This propelled the army, with an officer corps that was 70 percent Serb, to the center of the political storm. The army began to see its mission as holding Yugoslavia together.⁵³ Within short order, the JNA entered the Krajina to "protect" local Serbs.

Elections in Serbia, where the campaign centered on Serbian nationalism and claims of discrimination against Serbs in other republics, consolidated Milosevic's power. In Croatia, Franjo Tudjman, a former Partisan officer turned rightist historian, won the

Croatian elections, also on a nationalist platform. Shortly thereafter, clashes between JNA and Croatian militias began occurring in Krajina.

In June 1991, Slovenia declared its independence from Yugoslavia. Germany and Austria encouraged the move, but the United States, which remained committed to Yugoslavia's "territorial integrity", denounced it. Fighting between JNA and Slovene militias broke out at the border posts with Austria (the symbol of Slovenia's prosperity) and in Ljubljana. The war, which was relatively bloodless, ended in just over a week. Under pressure from the Europeans, the JNA withdrew from Slovenia, conferring *de facto* recognition on the new Slovene Republic. Ethnic homogeneity in Slovenia, particularly the small number of Serbs living in the country, made Slovenian independence possible.

The JNA redeployed to Croatia, which was holding its own independence referendum. The JNA warned the Croats not to follow Slovenia, but were ignored. Not only did the Croats declare independence, but they adopted a new constitution that the ethnic Serbs interpreted as making them second-class citizens. In their fervor to "Croatize" the country, the Croats passed laws designed to take away some of the Serbs positions in government, especially the police. Ethnic Serbs, under the protection of the JNA, revolted.⁵⁴

There were 600,000 Serbs in Croatia when the war started. Fighting first broke out in the Krajina, where the Serbs later declared the "Serb Republic of Krajina." The JNA then launched a massive offensive into northern Croatia. Vukovar, in northeastern Croatia, was besieged and systematically destroyed. The JNA heavily shelled Dubrovnik, a medieval city on the Dalmatian Coast. By the end of the year, after Europe's first major fighting since the Greek Civil War, one third of Croatia's territory lay in the hands of the Serbs. In a move to

show support for Croatia, Germany recognized Slovenian and Croatian independence in December 1991, followed by the whole of the EC in January 1992; Belgrade vehemently denounced the move.⁵⁵

In 1992, the fighting was brought to a temporary halt under a plan devised by UN mediator and former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. The Vance Plan, as it came to be known, called for creating four United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) that would be demilitarized and monitored by a UN peacekeeping force while talks were held to resolve the dispute. United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) troops deployed into eastern and western Slavonia and in Kninska Krajina in February 1992. While fighting halted, the conflict was not resolved. The Serb-held areas divide Croatia in two and deny it access to the Adriatic coast; therefore, the government has said it will not cede any territory.⁵⁶ The Serbs, on the other hand, have asserted that the Krajina is their historic homeland, and will never relinquish their claim to the territories.

Since January 1992, Croat troops have launched four offensives to reclaim parts of their territory: the first on the Miljenić plateau, the second in January 1993 on Maslinica, the third in September 1993 in the Gospić area, and the fourth into Pakrac in April 1995. Three of the four assaults failed and Serb forces fiercely retaliated on Croatian towns, and most recently into Zagreb itself.

The War Spreads to Bosnia

While events in Croatia boiled, Bosnians walked a political tightrope. Bosnia-Herzegovina may represent a "Yugoslavia in miniature." That is because it is the most heterogeneous of the former Yugoslav republics: Muslims, 43.7 percent; Serbs, 31.4 percent;

and Croats, 17.3 percent.⁵⁷ However, the loyalty of each of those groups to "Bosnia" was tenuous at best. Moreover, many Bosnian Serbs and Croats inevitably favored their home "nations." ⁵⁸

What seems to have alarmed the Serbs most was the growth of the Muslim population. Over the past thirty years, the proportion of Muslims in the republic increased steadily, from 25.7 percent in 1961 to 43.7 percent in 1991.⁵⁹ Bosnian Serb radicals, led by Dr. Radovan Karadžić, a former psychiatrist who once ran popular smoking cessation clinics, whipped up nationalist sentiments. They stressed the need for Serbian unity and reminded Serbs how the Turks had suppressed them when they had been divided. By extension, the Serbs smeared today's Muslims. Claiming that Muslims were laying the groundwork for an Islamic fundamentalist state, Serb nationalists implied that ill would befall Serbs under a Muslim-led government.⁶⁰ Bosnian Muslim nationalists were active, but not for the purpose of establishing a Muslim-dominated state as Serb propagandists claimed, but because Muslims and Croats in Bosnia saw no future in a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia that was disintegrating economically as well as politically. Radical Serb leaders warned other groups of trouble if they tried to secede from Yugoslavia. Nonetheless, Bosnian Muslims and Croats went ahead with their plans for an independence referendum.⁶¹

Matters came to a head in January 1992, when Bosnian Serbs declared their autonomy from the Bosnian Republic. This placed non-Serbs, especially Muslims, in a quandary: most did not have the same independence yearnings as Slovenes or Croats, yet they felt their political identity would not survive in a Serb-dominated rump Yugoslavia. Suddenly, Muslims and ethnic Croats displayed unprecedented support for independence.

The referendum of February 1992 overwhelmingly backed independence, but Serbs boycotted.⁶² The West rushed to recognize the new state, and matters deteriorated rapidly. The new government, led by Alija Izetbegović, tried desperately to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. To keep good relations with Milošević, he had allowed the JNA to pass through Bosnian territory while they attacked Croatia; now he allowed the Yugoslav army to withdraw from Croatia through his territory. When the army camped in barracks in Bosnian territory, he didn't protest too loudly, fearing JNA hostility. At the same time, he hoped for international support to work out a settlement.⁶³

In February 1992, the Bosnia-Herzegovina government invited the EC to broker a deal that would preserve the country. Lord Peter Carrington arrived in Sarajevo along with Jose Cutilheiro, the UN's negotiator, and managed to get an agreement to the principles under which a new government could be established. But Serbian roadblocks and barricades appeared soon after the referendum and tensions increased across the state.

War came to Bosnia the same way that it came to Croatia: an uprising of the Serb population, concomitant with the redeployment of the JNA as it withdrew from Croatia. Fighting broke out on 3 March 1992 in Bosanski Brod. On 6 April, ethnic Serb roadblocks cut off Sarajevo. In apparently a well-laid plan, Bosnian Serbs, now formed into the Bosnian Serb army (BSA) and supported by the JNA, began a systematic attack on all major population centers, focusing particularly hard on Muslim towns and regions. Yugoslav jets strafed Bosnian forces and their allies, the Croatian militia, or HVO.

The war quickly developed a nasty bent. The Serbs adopted a tactic called "ethnic cleansing" — the combined use of military force, terror, and personal humiliation of captured

civilians — to drive different ethnic groups from their homes so they could grab their land. Serbs raped thousands of women, held thousands of men in concentration camps, and massacred thousands of innocent civilians. In the following months, Serbs captured and ethnically cleansed the towns of Foča, Višegrad, Bijeljina, and Sanski Most in operations largely underreported by the Western media.⁶⁴

Sarajevo became a symbol of the war. In defiance of the EC and the UN, the BSA launched a total blockade and brought tanks, heavy artillery, and mortars to ring the city and began heavy shelling in May, June, and July. In July, Serbs cut water and electricity supplies. The Serbs laid siege to the city for several reasons: their immediate objective was to pressure the Bosnia-Herzegovina government into surrendering and later into acquiescing to various Serb plans for dividing the country. Furthermore, by razing Sarajevo, they could destroy the very symbol of Bosnia's multiethnic society.⁶⁵

SUMMARY

The same idea that inspired the founding of Yugoslavia — the right of self-determination — led to its dissolution. The roots of the conflict run deep, yet for all the talk of "tribal hatred" and "centuries-old conflicts," the breakup of Yugoslavia is the result of a contemporary historical process: the end of the Cold War and the implosion of Communist states. All the actors claim to be the victims of history. Yet, while nationalistic fervor may be the fuel of the current conflict, the fact remains that much of the situation is a result of individuals whose bid for power used ethnic paranoia as their organizing tool, a tool which was all too effective in the vacuum left by the dissolution of the Communist party.

After three years of war, no end is in sight. The West has played a duplicitous game

— recognizing the country as a multinational state but quickly advocating its division into ethnic cantons rather than standing up to Serb aggression. I believe that the Bosnian conflict is but the latest stage of a general war in the former Yugoslavia and that it may spread to other areas of the Balkans and possibly Eastern Europe before it is quelled.

THE BELLIGERENTS

THE FACTIONS, PERSONALITIES, AND THEIR POSITIONS

One cannot understand the main parties and principal actors in the Bosnian conflict without recognizing that the core group of players rarely act independently; e.g., the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats are constantly manipulated by their principal supporters in their neighboring countries. Thus, it is impossible to understand the conflict and the forces that fuel it without knowing the relationships between the internal and external groups and their motivations.

Originally, the war had two sides: the Bosnians and predominantly Croat Herzegovinians fighting the Bosnian Serbs who were supported by Serbia. But by the end of 1993, the Bosnia-Herzegovina alliance faltered and three distinct sides had formed, usually referred to as the Bosnians, the Croats and the Serbs. The following discussion describes the situation as it unfolded, the three factions, their key personalities, and positions.

As Yugoslavia began to fragment, the EC initiated a series of negotiations on the future of the country and each of its former republics. During an EC-sponsored meeting on Bosnia-Herzegovina held in Brussels from 7-9 March 1992, Croatian and Serbian representatives proposed to divide the country into three autonomous ethnic regions — one each for Muslims, Serbs and Croats — which would maintain a loose confederation. Conversely, out of fear that cantonization would eventually result in the annexation of the ethnic areas into Croatia and Serbia proper, Bosnian (predominantly Muslim) representatives argued in favor of a single unitary state. The net result of the negotiations was a document

signed by European Community negotiator Jose Cutilheiro that supported Bosnia-Herzegovina's sovereignty, but also endorsed the concept of cantonization. Moreover, the document neither specified how boundaries of each ethnic canton would be drawn nor did it take into account the fact that ethnic distribution in some areas made such a simple division impossible.⁶⁶

THE SERBS

The EC proposal satisfied no one. Generally, ethnic Serbs living in predominantly Serbian areas of Bosnia opposed Bosnian independence and favored union or close association with Serbia.⁶⁷ Many of these Serbs are affiliated with the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS). Their position is both irredentist and extreme: they claim that their rights would be endangered in an independent Bosnian state and that a combined Muslim and Croatian majority would persecute them. These fears are based on the Serbs' interpretation of history as a long struggle against domination by the Muslims (whom they equate with the Turks) and Croats. Some Serbs also fear that the government would be dominated by Muslim fundamentalists.⁶⁸

Furthermore, these groups claim that all Serbs have the right to live in one state. They contend that since other nationalities seceded from Yugoslavia, Serbs should also have the right to secede from Bosnia — or any other former Yugoslav republic. Therefore, the political and military strategies of Serbian forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina (and Croatia) have been to establish control over those areas where Serbs constitute a majority or substantial minority of the population and to merge those regions with Serbia (or the new Yugoslavia).⁶⁹

Publicly, Radovan Karadžić and the SDS deny they are preparing to enter into a

"Greater Serbia." Rather, he contends that they support the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina along ethnic lines with each zone under the control of the majority national group. However, Karadžić and his followers believe that Serbian-controlled cantons should include 70 percent of the country's territory despite the fact that Serbs constitute only 31.3 percent of Bosnia's population. On 17 March, Serbian leaders presented Cutilheiro with a map of the proposed ethnic division of Bosnia-Herzegovina in which Serbs claimed 70 percent of the land. The remaining 30 percent of Bosnia-Herzegovina's territory would be divided between Muslims and Croats, who comprise 43.7 and 17.3 percent of the population respectively.⁷⁰ The Serb leaders justify their claims to that much territory by claiming that the Serbs, who are largely farmers, own 70 percent of Bosnia-Herzegovina's land and therefore are entitled to those areas.⁷¹

Serbian president Slobodan Milošević denies that Serbia is involved in the war or that his forces have intervened. He has portrayed the conflict as a "civil war" between indigenous Bosnia-Herzegovina groups. However, the evidence refutes his claims.⁷² The Serbian government has openly supported the political and military aims of the SDS in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbian government also has condoned, and in some cases supported, the formation of at least five paramilitary groups in Serbia which operate in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁷³ Furthermore, the JNA continues to take part in military operations throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina providing logistics support, air support (fighter bombers operated over B-H until enforcement of the no-fly zone was enhanced in April 1993, thereafter, JNA helicopters operated in a variety of combat roles), manpower, and material.⁷⁴

It is important to note that many Bosnian Serbs, primarily those living in multiethnic

cities such as Sarajevo, support neither Milošević, Karadžić nor their followers. Many Serbs actively support the ideal of a pluralistic society in Bosnia and the Bosnian government. Moreover, Serbs currently serve in Bosnia's army and police forces. Some of the more prominent are: General Jovan Divjak, deputy commander of Bosnian forces and Mirko Pejanović, Serbian member of Bosnia's collective presidency.

The Bosnian and Krajina Serbs

The two main Serb factions (outside of Serbia) are the Pale faction, led by Dr. Radovan Karadžić, and the Krajina Serbs led by Dr. Milan Babić. The Pale faction is closely allied to Belgrade, Karadžić is little more than Milošević's puppet. Belgrade initially supported the Krajina Serbs, but when Babić emerged as the most prominent leader, Milošević distanced himself from that group.⁷⁵

In the current war, the Pale Serbs are the contenders. Their party, the SDS, has led the rump "government" ever since Serbs declared autonomy. There is little opposition.

Key Personalities

Radovan Karadžić leads the Bosnian Serbs. Born in Montenegro, he was a psychiatrist before the war who counseled the Sarajevo soccer team and ran smoking cessation clinics. He was one of the leading propagandists of the prewar period, histrionically bemoaning the plight of Serbs and issuing dire warnings of Serbs under an Islamic state. Without doubt, he is Milošević's front man.⁷⁶

Nikola Koljević is the vice president of the Bosnian Serbs. Before the war, he was professor of Shakespearian studies at the University of Sarajevo. He was a member of the pre-war Bosnia-Herzegovina government, but became a strident nationalist and left with

the other Serbs in the SDS. His closest friends before the war were Muslims and his current politics baffle all those who knew him. He handles many of the negotiations on humanitarian aid with the UN and private agencies; they regard him as personable but ineffective at removing operational obstacles put up by the BSA.⁷⁷

Goran Hodžić is the current leader of the Krajina Serbs. This faction of the Serbs is far more turbulent and unstable than even the Bosnian Serbs and the leadership of this group has changed three times in as many years.⁷⁸

Milan Babić was the second leader of the Krajina. A dentist by profession, he was a communist apparatchik until 1991. He then joined the SDS, which had been formed by psychiatrist Jovan Rašković. He quickly became Rašković's protégé and became leader of the Knin Town Council. There, he demonstrated exceptional organizational skills and assumed the number two position in the SDS. When his mentor went to the U.S. for several months, Babić began a series of trips to Belgrade where he obtained aid from Milošević for the arming of the Krajina. When Rašković returned from the U.S., he found that he had lost control of his party to Babić. Babić changed the demands of the Krajina Serbs from autonomy to independence. Eventually he fell out with Milošević but still retains strong support from Belgrade, especially from the JNA.⁷⁹

Milan Martić is the leader of the Krajina militia. A police inspector before the war, Martić was Babić's trusted assistant and became interior minister and military organizer for the Krajina Serbs. His efforts led to the formation of the Marticevci, a ruthless gang of paramilitary terrorists. When the fighting shifted to Bosnia, he organized similar groups there, but later fell out with Babić and has lost most of his influence.⁸⁰

The Bosnian Serb's Supporters

Slobodan Milošević, President of Serbia, is the Bosnian Serbs' principal supporter.⁸¹ Milošević rules as an autocrat. A small time party apparatchik, he rose to become absolute ruler of Serbia through the inner Communist party apparatus. Milošević is very suspicious, even paranoid, of his rivals — and many of his subordinates — and is constantly reshuffling his government. He demands absolute loyalty to himself, but does not feel compelled to reward it. No one is known to have significant influence over him other than his wife Mirjana Marković. He is both admired and feared by his collaborators.⁸²

Milošević rose to power on a Serb nationalist platform. After his initial political successes during 1988/1990 when he came to power, Milošević has constantly lost popular support, although to conclude that he will be tossed out anytime soon is probably only wishful thinking by the West. Despite an economy devastated by sanctions, he has maintained his position by controlling the press and the police. He has also turned to the army, a small clique of old time Communists, and a new special interest group who rely on his policies, the war profiteers. Thus, all his closest supporters and inner circle are people who have a vested interest in his regime.

Politicians closest to Mr. Milošević are a seedy lot; some have a long history of criminal behavior, others are bizarre supernationalists. Most prominent are:

Borislav Jović was a professional communist party apparatchik who has been the number two man of power since Mr. Milošević's rise. He is head of the Socialist party, president of the rump presidency of SFRY and is absolutely loyal to Mr. Milošević.⁸³

Vojislav Seselj is head of the Radical party and paramilitary "Četniks." He is a

member of Milošević's coalition and a fierce Serbian nationalist. The Radical party is Milošević's "reserve party," a means whereby he can form coalitions and still retain control. Milošević promoted Seselj through state controlled television and financed his party to protect himself from the more moderate opposition parties on his right. Seselj is happy with this arrangement for the time being, but his own ambitions may collide with Milošević's at some point.⁸⁴

Serbian and Yugoslav Forces

Serbian forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina consist of a number of regular and irregular armed groups, some from within Bosnia-Herzegovina but also many from Serbia including regular and reserve forces of the JNA. Created by Karadžić and the SDS, the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) is a predominately indigenous paramilitary formation.

General Ratko Mladić commands the BSA. Mladić began the war in Croatia as commander of the Knin Corps but was appointed to head the BSA in May 1992. Born in Bosnia, Mladić was a career officer in the JNA who is regarded as an exceptional and ruthless field officer. He is also considered to be one of the leading war criminals of both the Croatian and Bosnian Wars, and is one of the instigators of the ethnic cleansing campaign.⁸⁵ He is said to despise politics, though he seems to revel in using his forces to exert pressure on politicians. He became one of the leading obstacles to deploying UN peacekeeping troops under the Vance Plan. His world view is said to have been shaped by his family's experiences and the intra-Yugoslav fighting of World War II (his father was killed attacking an Ustaša-held village), and he sees Croatian independence as a revival of German hegemony in Europe. He is also a fanatical anti-Muslim and claims that Serbia is

fighting a war against the spread of Islamic fundamentalism on behalf of Europe.⁸⁶

At the outbreak of fighting, JNA forces stationed in the country⁸⁷ plus forces from Serbia, Montenegro, and Serbian-occupied areas of Croatia, attacked Bosnian and Croatian positions throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. In many cases, the JNA attacks were coordinated and launched in conjunction with Serbian paramilitary groups: indigenous, as well as from Serbia itself. A nominal withdrawal of JNA troops from Bosnia-Herzegovina took place on 19 May 1992. However, Belgrade authorities claimed that 80 percent of the Yugoslav Army troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina were Bosnian Serbs⁸⁸ who were free to remain in Bosnia-Herzegovina and fight on behalf of Serbian forces in the republic. As a result, a force of at least 30,000 men with tanks, artillery, rocket launchers and large stocks of ammunition remained to fight for the Bosnian. These troops and weapons were absorbed into the new BSA.⁸⁹

Many paramilitary groups have also joined the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the Serbian side, including some from Serbia proper. These paramilitaries include forces commanded by Zeljko Raznjatović (widely referred to as "Arkan") which are most active in the eastern parts of Bosnia. Other paramilitary units are loyal to Vojislav Seselj, the ultra right-wing leader of the Serbian Radical party (*Srpska Radikalna Stranka*) and the Serbian Četnik movement (*Srpski Cetnicki Pokret*). Seselj's group of paramilitaries operate throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. The so-called "White Eagles" (*Beli Orlovi*) paramilitary units, loyal to Mirko Jović, also operate throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, as do paramilitaries commanded by Dragoslav Bokan.⁹⁰ Another Serbian-based paramilitary leader operating in eastern Bosnia is Dragan Vasiljković (a.k.a. "Captain Dragan"). Serbian paramilitary groups

conduct military operations in conjunction with, in the presence of, and with the knowledge of JNA and BSA forces and commanders.⁹¹

THE CROATS

The rough, Dinaric Mountains of Herzegovina always fostered a tough, conservative, supernationalistic and often extremist breed of Slav: first the Krajina Serbs and lately, the Herzegovinian Croats. Not only are many of the right wing nationalists of Bosnia from this region, so are many of their supporters in Croatia. The views of this small segment of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Croatian community have spread, some propelled by the polarizing effects that arise in any war among factions split along national or ethnic lines, but also because of well-intentioned, but ultimately disastrous peace proposals put forward by international negotiators that promoted the concept of national divisions and heightened the Croat population's awareness of their minority status. Thus, while many Croats, especially those in Sarajevo and the Tuzla region support the Bosnian cause, most Croats in Herzegovina and a large segment of Central Bosnia Croats tend toward ethnic extremists.⁹²

Bosnian ethnic Croats, Croats in Croatia proper and the government of the Republic of Croatia are seriously divided about the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly over the status of Western Herzegovina, a predominantly ethnic Croatian region.⁹³ Liberal and moderate Croatian elements support an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina; similar to the Muslims. In the early stages of the war, most Croats living outside Herzegovina supported this position, and their most prominent leaders joined the collective presidency of the country. However, the conservative wing of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) in Bosnia, led by Mate Boban, supports partition and Croatian annexation for the predominantly

Croatian area of Western Herzegovina.

The Croatian government's position on Bosnia-Herzegovina has been contradictory. Croatia recognized the country on 7 April 1992, and has a standing military alliance with it. Tudjman denies that Croatia has designs on Bosnian territory and says that he supports a loose confederation of communities as proposed in the EC, Vance-Owen and later the Owen-Stoltenberg Peace Plans, all of which Croatia has formally endorsed. However, Tudjman put pressure on Bosnian president Izetbegović to commit his government to a confederation with Croatia. Moreover, statements from President Tudjman, and Croatian Army actions, indicate that Croatia has plans to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina with Serbia.⁹⁴

Izetbegović's resistance to confederation with Croatia was met by what amounted to an ultimatum from Boban: either join with Tudjman and proclaim a confederation or Croatian forces stationed near Sarajevo would refuse to aid the city. Since June 1992, Boban has increased pressure on the Bosnian government by blocking delivery of arms to the Sarajevo government.⁹⁵

On 3 July 1992, Boban proclaimed a quasi-independent Croatian state called the "Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna" made up of the third of Bosnia's territory not occupied by Serbian forces. The new "republic" is to function as an autonomous Croatian territory within Bosnia-Herzegovina, and includes most of Herzegovina and the Posavina region in northeast Bosnia. Although predominantly Croatian, this area incorporates some towns and villages where Muslims and Serbs form a majority.⁹⁶

Key Personalities

Mate Boban is president of the Croatian community of Herzeg-Bosna, seated in

Mostar. He is also president of the Bosnia-Herzegovina wing of the HDZ.⁹⁷ He is the strongest promoter of merging Herzegovina into the Republic of Croatia and has been instrumental in forcing the break with the Izetbegović government. An anti-Muslim hard-liner, he has close relations with Croatia's President Tudjman.⁹⁸ He is also reputed to be a smalltime mafioso. Prior to the war he headed a ring of thieves who stole cars from Germany and brought them to Yugoslavia for sale. Born in Herzegovina, he spent much of his life in Germany. Rumors at the end of 1993 indicated he had run afoul of the Croatian defense minister and there were rumors that Tudjman was trying to find a way to push him aside.⁹⁹

Jadranko Prlić is prime minister of Herzeg-Bosna. A strong supporter of Mate Boban and "Greater Croatia," he is from Mostar. A right wing politician, he was originally a Communist, then a member of the prewar Bosnian government. However, he refused to join the Bosnian collective presidency when the country became independent.¹⁰⁰

Herzeg-Bosna's Principal Supporters in Croatia

Franjo Tudjman is President of the Republic of Croatia, and president and founder of HDZ, a right wing, nationalistic politician and absolute ruler of Croatia.¹⁰¹ Tudjman is also a former JNA general, kicked out of the army for his role in the "Croatian Spring,"¹⁰² and spent some time in prison because of his nationalist ideas. In the late 1970s he reappeared as director of the Yugoslav Institute of the History of the Proletarian Movement, which gave him a chance to promote his nationalistic ideas. He fancies himself a historian, and has written a number of alarming treatises in which his overt racism emerges.¹⁰³ Tudjman won election as head of the (Yugoslav) Republic of Croatia in 1990 by an overwhelming majority

and pushed for independence. After independence in May 1991, he formed the new government as a presidential republic (i.e., the president is preeminent over the parliament). He was elected again in 1992. He has no meaningful political opposition despite (and because of) a disastrous economy and a shrinking standard of living (and a weak military position). Despite his unchallenged popularity, he maintains complete control over the press and limits the opposition.¹⁰⁴

In regard to Bosnia, Tudjman plays a cynical and muddled game. While his government has formally recognized and exchanged ambassadors with Bosnia-Herzegovina, he publicly supports Herzeg-Bosna and the formation of what he calls a "union of three ethnic states" in Bosnia. Furthermore, he has consistently sought a deal with the Serbs to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina into two parts, hoping to trade Muslim areas to the Serbs in return for the Krajina — a strategy in which he has been consistently outwitted by Milošević.¹⁰⁵

Gojko Šušak is minister of defense and the second most powerful man in Croatia.¹⁰⁶ He is a shrewd, hard politician. Born in Herzegovina, he spent two decades abroad, mostly in Canada (where he owned a pizza parlor). He has been able to use his overseas connections to raise millions of dollars for the Croatian cause. Because of his Herzegovinian roots, he has strongly supported the concept of "Greater Croatia" and has been instrumental in funneling arms and money to the Croatian Defense Council (*Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane*, or HVO). His best men and logistics support have consistently gone there. He has been criticized privately for his role in the fall of Vukovar — which one senior officer said would not have fallen had he sent arms to that city instead of to his homeland.¹⁰⁷

The Croatian Opposition to the Tudjman-Boban Policy

There are few moderates in Croatia, and it is difficult for them to speak out, especially on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Most newspapers and Croatian television are little more than propaganda vehicles for Tudjman and Boban and give a very distorted picture of the situation in Bosnia.¹⁰⁸ However, several bright spots endure. They include the hierarchy of the Catholic church and a majority of the political opposition. Significantly, Cardinal Franjo Kuharić, head of the Catholic church in Croatia, has not shown support for any of Tudjman's nationalistic ideas nor the Herzeg-Bosna faction.¹⁰⁹

Croatian Forces

In the early days of the war, the Croatian community of Bosnia formed the HVO which fought alongside the Bosnian Army but as separate and distinct units. In Herzegovina and other areas where the Croats were a majority, it was not uncommon for Muslims to join the HVO. After the public presentation of the Vance-Owen Peace Plan, relations deteriorated between the Croats and Muslims in Herzegovina. In January 1993 fighting broke out between the two groups in Mostar and Gornji Vakuf, and, in the spring spread to Central Bosnia.

Despite Bosnian attempts to reconcile with the HVO in those two areas, fighting has continued. At first, the Bosnian forces lost ground, but in the summer of 1993, they began to regain territory and to push the HVO out of most of Central Bosnia. Zagreb has tried in vain to strengthen the HVO with supplies and troops, especially officers and NCOs, but their efforts have had little effect. The Serbs have given the HVO artillery and tank support in several operations, most notably the shelling of the Muslims on the east bank of Mostar and

many of the HVO soldiers who were forced out of Travnik joined the Serbs and were redeployed to fight the Bosnians at Maglaj. When HVO forces blockaded humanitarian cargoes from going north to Tuzla, the Bosnians finally turned on their former allies and took the strategic town of Vareš, handing the HVO their worst defeat in the war.¹¹⁰

Presently, an estimated 30,000 HVO troops are in Bosnia-Herzegovina, armed and trained by the government of Croatia.

The HVO contains several key actors. The first commander was *General Milivoje Petković* who aligned the HVO with the B-H Army. For most of 1993, the principal personality in the HVO was its second commander, *General Slobodan Praljak*.¹¹¹ Born in Herzegovina and the son of a much hated Yugoslav police inspector, Praljak is a multifaceted person. He is an engineer, a film maker, and professor of philosophy. He lived in Zagreb before the war, but quickly went to Sunja (now UN Protected Area North) as a volunteer when fighting broke out in Croatia. He has no formal military training but rose swiftly to the rank of colonel due to his leadership and very strong personality. When war broke out in Tomislavgrad, Herzegovina, he resigned from the Croatian army and went to Herzegovina, first to Bugojno and then to Mostar where he successfully defended the city against the Serbs. Shortly after he arrived in Mostar, he was promoted to head of the HVO. However, he had constant rows with his officers, especially General Petković, the man whom he replaced as commander of HVO, who became his deputy. He was forced to resign in November because of the Vareš defeat and because things were not going well in Central Bosnia for the HVO. *General Ante Roso* is the current commander of the HVO. A former French Foreign Legionnaire, he has been the key Croat player in the effort to form a Croat-

Bosnian Federation Army.¹¹²

The Croatian Army

Despite Croatian government protests to the contrary, forces from the Republic of Croatia have participated in hostilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, first against the Serbian forces, then in support of the HVO against the Bosnians. The Croatian army (*Hrvatska Vojska* or HV) is present in Western Herzegovina and in the northern Posavina area and increasingly has been seen in Central Bosnia. Most of the HV troops within Croatia are based along the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina but are dispatched to Bosnian areas in which hostilities have commenced.¹¹³

Antun Tus was the first chief of staff of the Croatian army. Because of his moderate views, he was replaced by General *Janko Bobetko* and is now special military advisor to President Tudjman. Since Bobetko took over, support to the HVO has been expanded.¹¹⁴

Croatian Paramilitary Forces

Various paramilitary groups also operate in support of the Croatian community in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Leaders of the ultra right wing Croatian party of Rights formed an armed wing called the "Croatian armed forces" (*Hrvatske Oruzane Snage* or HOS). HOS, which engages in military operations against Serbian forces in Croatia, also joined the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹¹⁵ The Croatian army claims to have placed HOS under Croatian government control and denies that they operate in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

THE BOSNIANS

Bosnians are perhaps the most confusing of the three factions because there are still elements of all three ethnic groups supporting the idea of a multinational state and trying

against all odds to hold the country together while large sectors of the other groups have polarized and are seeking partition and ultimately, affiliation with Croatia or Serbia.

In general, Muslims, Croats not from Herzegovina and portions of the Serbian population support the official position of the current government, led by President Alija Izetbegović and his party of Democratic Action (SDA): an independent, multiethnic, and democratic Bosnia-Herzegovina. The moderate faction of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) in Bosnia-Herzegovina also supports this position.

Bosnian society traditionally contained many factions: conservative vs. liberal Muslims, rural peasants vs. Sarajevo intellectuals, Serb and Croat irredentists vs. proponents of a multi-cultural society, Herzegovinians vs. Bosnians. Despite these divisions, Bosnians had lived together in harmony for almost half a century -- as the high percentage of mixed marriages -- as many as one-third -- attests.¹¹⁶ Yet divisive forces lay dormant inside the republic, waiting to be exploited by extremists, to drive a wedge between the ethnic groups.

Perhaps the most important division was the distinction between urban and rural peoples. For years, the cities, first Sarajevo and later the larger towns, dominated rural areas, receiving priority for capital investment and development. This created resentment among rural Bosnians of all stripes, but especially the Serbs who felt that they had been historically discriminated against -- first by the Turks, then by the Austro-Hungarians. During the communist period, the leadership of the republic was multiethnic and Serbs were well represented. But, with independence, many Serbs felt threatened not just by being a minority in government, but by losing out to the "Sarajevo crowd," i.e., the multiethnic, urban-focused Bosnians.

The second urban/rural division that plays a part is the rift between the urban, liberal Muslims of Sarajevo and the conservative, more devout, rural Muslims, especially those of the eastern zone and the Sandžaks.¹¹⁷ As appeals to the West for help have failed, the conservatives have increasingly turned to the Islamic states for aid. Some of those donors have made their assistance conditional on the Bosnian Muslims more rigidly observing conservative Islamic practices. Originally, there was little support for this from the senior officers of the Bosnian Army or from the soldiers drawn from the urban zones. But as the main recruits have come from the rural areas and embittered refugees, the army has become increasingly Muslim-oriented. This has worried not only the Croat and Serb supporters of Bosnia, but it has also raised concerns among the urban and liberal Muslims.¹¹⁸

As Yugoslavia began to disintegrate, political parties based on nationalist lines rose to prominence. Three major parties formed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the SDA representing the Muslims, the SDS representing the Serbs, and HDZ representing the Croats, with the latter essentially being a branch of the Croatian ruling party. When the parliament called for a referendum on independence in 1991, the SDS stormed out, withdrew from the government, and boycotted the referendum. After the vote, they took to the hills and launched the war. Today, the Bosnia-Herzegovina government is made up of the SDA, remnants of the HDZ, and several other smaller parties. The original government had many Croatian members who later became hard-line separatists. Some early Serb and Croat members subsequently left the country and were gradually replaced. And as the war dragged on, some members became identified with the rampant corruption that developed.¹¹⁹ Finally, in the autumn of 1993, Izetbegović carried out a major reshuffling of the government: he dismissed many

ministers and key officials and elevated the foreign minister, Haris Silajdžić, to the post of prime minister and endowed the office with most of the power of government.

Key Bosnia-Herzegovina Personalities

Alija Izetbegović is president of Bosnia-Herzegovina and is leader of the SDA.¹²⁰

Born in Bosnia, he became disaffected by the socialist state and turned towards Islam in his 30s. In the early 1970s, he wrote a text which outlined the structure of an Islamic state. This led to his imprisonment and consequently, a rise to prominence among the more conservative factions of the Muslim community in Bosnia. Though he has since moderated his views and is generally regarded in the West as a pragmatist and a strong supporter of a pluralistic government, Serbs and many Croats believe that he still wants to create an Islamic state in Bosnia. They point to the fact that he has many fundamentalists among the Muslims in his administration.¹²¹

Among his Muslim critics, Izetbegovic is regarded as too soft for the hard decisions needed in the peace negotiations and for settling differences in the collective presidency. Many people blame Bosnia's weak position in the war on his failure to recognize Serbian intentions when the JNA withdrew from Croatia, and for failing to take adequate military preparations when the Serbs threatened to attack Bosnia if the Muslims and Croats voted for secession. Many critics chide him for having encouraged the formation of a state based on national groups — which ultimately led to the war.¹²²

Ejup Ganić is vice president of the country. He was a successful and highly regarded scientist and professor prior to the war.¹²³ After the incident described below, he lost some of his clout. Many journalists also concluded that he had lost his sense of direction. After a

year of war, he reemerged as a critic of the president and has been rumored to be building support among the army.

Early in the war, the Bosnian leadership split over a dispute between the President and Vice President Ejup Ganić. Izetbegović had been taken hostage by the JNA as he arrived back in Sarajevo after attending peace talks in Lisbon. Ganić conducted negotiations for Izetbegović's release, through an Irish officer working for Lord Carrington. When the Bosnians learned that the president had been taken to the JNA barracks next to the airport (at Lukavica), Bosnian Territorial Defense forces surrounded the JNA headquarters in the center of the city. The Irish officer guaranteed the Serb commander, General Milutin Kukanjac, and his men safe passage from the building under UN protection if they released the president. As soon as Izetbegović was released, a convoy left the building with the JNA soldiers. After travelling several hundred meters, a unit of the territorials attacked the convoy killing four Serbs, including two senior colonels. Kukanjac escaped and immediately began to shell the city. Izetbegović blamed Ganić for the fiasco. For months during the early part of the war, the two rarely spoke.

Dr. Haris Silajdžić: In the reshuffling of the government that took place in the aftermath of the Bosnia's rejection of the September 1993 peace plan, Haris Silajdžić emerged as one of the strongest new players in the Bosnian government. He has become an articulate and popular spokesman for the Bosnian cause, especially in Washington. Born in 1945 in Sarajevo, Silajdžić received a Ph.D. degree from the University of Benghazi, Libya. He was a professor at the University of Pristina, Kosovo, and has published several scholarly works on the field of international relations. He was appointed minister of foreign affairs in

1990. He speaks English, Arabic and French.¹²⁴

Fikret Abdić is the leader of the Bihać region, the western-most area of the country which quickly became an enclave squeezed between the Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia and the Krajina and Croatia. A Muslim, he was director of Agrokomerc, the largest food distribution company in Yugoslavia. He used his position to political advantage building his constituency on his workers.¹²⁵ He is also regarded as one of the most corrupt politicians in Bosnia and has been linked to such wartime scams as selling documents allowing people refugee status in foreign countries then blackmailing the waiting relatives by threatening to bring the false documents to the attention of the authorities.¹²⁶

Abdić has been able to remain in power by skillfully using his connections with the Serbs to keep them at bay. The Muslims and Serbs had a brief history of good relations in this region dating back to World War II when the two fought side-by-side against the Fascists in Croatia and the 1950s when they joined together in a peasant uprising against the Communists (which Belgrade brutally suppressed — thus tightening the bond between the two groups)¹²⁷. When war broke out in Slovenia and Croatia, Abdić permitted the JNA to use the Bihać military airfield for staging air strikes against both.

Abdić has been a loner since then. When no Muslims were willing to negotiate with the Serbs after the Vance-Owen plan collapsed, he joined the Croats in going to Geneva. At one point, he declared autonomy for Bihać and is most likely to lead the region into some sort of relationship with Croatia since it will be separated by a wide Serb-controlled area from the rest of Bosnia.

Bosnian Forces

During Tito's reign, Yugoslavia walked a narrow line between East and West. Constantly worried about a possible Soviet invasion, or, to a lesser extent the West, Yugoslavia developed a vast defensive capability similar to that of Switzerland. It included compulsory military service for all males, organization of local militias, and stockpiling of weapons throughout the territory. Each of Yugoslavia's six republics maintained a territorial defense structure, which included civilian security forces (*Civilna Zastita*) and a local reserve militia. All former soldiers who served in the federal army could be called up to serve in the local territorial defense units.¹²⁸

One of the most significant factors that shaped the early fighting, was a provision in the law that allowed each *Teritorijalna Odbrana* - TO to distribute weapons to individuals in consultation with the JNA. The JNA confiscated most of the weapons stored in territorial defense arsenals in Croatia prior to the outbreak of war in that republic, but allowed the Serbs in the Krajina to keep the arms that had been individually distributed. This gave the Krajina Serbs an immediate advantage over their neighbors when fighting broke out. In Bosnia, the JNA confiscated TO arsenals in Serbian-controlled areas and redistributed the weapons to Serbian paramilitary groups.

The Bosnian Army (BiH) emerged out of the former republic's territorial defense structure, which included local level militias. The BiH is armed, in part, with the weaponry that remained from the local TO weapons caches in the predominantly Muslim and Croatian areas. Most of the BiH soldiers are Muslims, although Croats and some Serbs also fight with Bosnian presidency forces. Bosnian troops nominally are commanded by the government

of Bosnia-Herzegovina but because of the siege of Sarajevo many commands are virtually autonomous.

Gen. Seffer Halilović was the first commander of the Bosnian Army. He organized the defense of Sarajevo and carried out a number of successful operations in Central Bosnia. Though effective, he was replaced in mid-1993 because he had commanded JNA troops during the battle for Vukovar during the war in Croatia and was despised by the Croats.

Rasim Delić is the current commander of the BiH. He formerly commanded the Tuzla sector, and since taking command of the BiH is credited with professionalizing the army and taking it on the offensive in Central Bosnia.¹²⁹

SUMMARY

Politically and militarily the situation amongst the belligerents in the war is complex, and therefore, difficult for the outsider to understand. There are an overabundance of political parties and personalities who are often at odds with members of their own governments. Opportunists have risen to the surface, exponentially complicating efforts to bring about peace. Military and paramilitary forces have, to a large extent, established their own agendas, carrying out sometimes brutal campaigns against civilian populations of all sides. These factors make the likelihood of a political settlement unlikely, and have led to a growing dismay in the West. This is "the Balkan experience."

DECIPHERING THE ISSUES

GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF THE WAR

One of the keys to discerning the nature of the present conflict is understanding where the people were living before the war. While it is true that the population was highly intermixed, in virtually every *općina* (district) distinct patterns of habitation could still be found. For example, Serbs and Croats made up a much larger percentage of the rural population than Muslims, who were largely urban dwellers.¹³⁰ The ethnic element of the urban-rural demography helps explain how the Serbs and later the Croats gained territory so quickly and encircled Muslim towns — they already controlled much of the land when the war broke out. It also explains why the Serbs are demanding a greater percentage of the territory than their percentage of the population. Though they make up less than a third of the total, they owned or worked about 60 percent of the land. This is one of the least understood, but most complicated factors in the peace talks.

Recent Demographic Changes

Industrial development in the 1970s and 1980s changed the ethnic makeup of Bosnia. The central government decided to expand the Bosnian industrial potential to boost exports. Most of this new industry was located in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, there were not enough resident skilled workers to meet the demands so thousands of families streamed into the republic to fill the job vacancies. These migrations dramatically altered the ethnic make-up of many cities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹³¹

The case of Mostar is indicative. The largely Croat population originally came from

the rough, rocky country in the western Herzegovina (e.g., Posušje, Čitluk, Listica,). They were associated with mining so many settled around Mostar's coal mine. As a result, the oldest Croat settlements are located in the west on the road to Listica (Balinovac, Jasenica). The Muslim population, on the other hand, lived on the east bank of the Neretva river. With the new industrial development that started after World War II, new Serb settlers, mainly from nearby rural areas to the east, arrived looking for jobs. They settled predominantly in areas on the east bank of the Neretva and in Brankovac and Bjelusine. Three newly built housing projects changed the face, as well as the ethnic structure of the city. All the residents lived in harmony until the war broke out. Then, as in other areas, each group tried to expel others from "their" zones. First, Bosnian/HVO troops forced Serbs to leave, illustrating that the policy of "ethnic cleansing" was not limited to Serbs alone. Then, when fighting broke out between the former allies, the Croats began pushing all the Muslims over to the east bank of the Neretva.¹³²

The Impact of Refugee Movements on the Fighting

When the war first broke out in Bosnia, many citizens were stunned. Despite many warnings and the presence of large numbers of JNA troops, most people believed that war would be avoided. Moreover, because the population was so mixed, few people would have known which direction to go. Therefore, few people had taken any precautionary moves and most remained in place once the war began. Thus, when small towns and villages came under attack from the surrounding countryside, rural Muslims or Croats might fled to larger towns. But, since these cities were usually surrounded by a hostile rural countryside, new arrivals were contained in ethnic enclaves.

All that changed with the advent of ethnic cleansing. The Croats started the practice in northern Croatia when they expelled a group of Serbs from villages taken on the edge of the Krajina,¹³³ but the Serbs quickly adopted the tactic with a vengeance. In Bosnia, they focused their efforts on the Muslims and any family loyal to Bosnia-Herzegovina. As soon as they captured an area, they expelled the other nationalities. If anyone remained, the Serbs carried out a campaign of terror against them.¹³⁴ This led to the largest flow of refugees in Europe since World War II.

While many of those fleeing took sanctuary in neighboring countries, thousands sought refuge inside Bosnia-Herzegovina. Initially, the displaced were welcomed in most places, Croats helped Muslims and vice versa. But in early 1993, the numbers of people moving into areas still held by the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army or HVO grew at an alarming pace. The newcomers competed for jobs and relief supplies at a time that the UN was increasingly having a hard time moving goods up from the coast. Resentment began to replace the welcoming attitude that had prevailed.¹³⁵

The publication of the Vance-Owen plan map with its ethnic cantons, the long period of constant revisions which implied that the borders of cantons could be altered, and the upsurge of migration from eastern B-H when the Serbs completed their campaigns against the enclaves, exacerbated tensions and ended unchallenged population movements. The Croats perceived that the Muslims were purposely directing refugees into areas where the Croats were a majority — presumably to change the ethnic makeup of those *općinas* and "Muslimize" them.¹³⁶ In arriving at this misbegotten conclusion the Croats failed to take into account that: refugees were forced to follow the terrain and stay within the lines of

confrontation, they had little choice in where they could go, and that by closing the border to new refugees in 1992, Croatia had forced the Muslims to seek safety in predominantly Croatian Herzegovina. Nonetheless, by January 1993 fighting had broken out in Mostar and Gornji Vakuf and by spring, had spread to Central Bosnia. Since then, each new movement of refugees has caused more tension and, often, new fighting.

UNHCR has been ineffective at addressing the problem. Instead of marshalling the movements of the displaced and helping people get to areas where they would not be attacked or contribute to the fighting, the U.N. has elected to remain disengaged, claiming that participating in or influencing population movements could only exacerbate the problem and possibly contribute to ethnic cleansing.¹³⁷

THE WAR WITHIN THE WAR

Within civil wars there are internal conflicts — wars within wars — that can sometimes become as serious as the original and which can often influence or change the final outcome. In the Bosnian conflict a major sub-war has emerged, a bitter fight between the Bosnians and their former allies, the Croatian Defense Council (HVO). Before the current conflict, Muslims and Croats had lived together in Bosnia and Herzegovina in peace, even during World War II when the Četniks committed atrocities against the Muslims and the Ustaša killed thousands of Serbs. Today however, the situation is changing. The main problems are the resurgent Croatian nationalism in both Croatia and Herzegovina, the territorial aspirations of Franjo Tudjman, and the Croatian president's desire to trade Bosnia for concessions from the Serbs regarding Krajina.

At the outset of the war, the Bosnian Croats, supported by the Zagreb government,

backed the forces of the Bosnian presidency against the Serbs. But the HVO was neither a consistent nor staunch ally, they made only a token showing on some fronts, did little to help break the blockade of Sarajevo, and constantly stole fuel and military supplies bound for the Bosnian forces.¹³⁸ In mid-January 1993, the alliance began to crack; fighting erupted between the HVO and Bosnian army forces near Jablanica and quickly spread to Mostar. Only several weeks of intense negotiation stopped the fighting.

The fighting was directly linked to two factors: the announcement of the Vance-Owen plan and the movement of thousands of Muslim refugees into the city. When the Croats saw the plan's proposed map, they began establishing solid control over all the areas that were designated as Croatian. Mate Boban, Tudjman's front man for the Croatian-imposed "state" of Herzeg-Bosna, vowed to take all the land and put it under Croatian authority, by force if necessary. Boban won many Croats over by exploiting their fears about becoming an ethnic minority in their designated areas. Thousands of Muslims fleeing the fighting in eastern and Central Bosnia had fled south and moved into Mostar. Boban and other Croatian leaders claimed that the Bosnian government was directing the refugees to Herzegovina to "colonize" the area.¹³⁹

In April, fighting spread to Central Bosnia. The atrocities carried out by the HVO against Muslims around Vitez prompted the UN special human rights team to condemn the HVO for "a deliberate and systematic policy of ethnic cleansing" against Muslims.¹⁴⁰ Then in early May, the HVO launched an all-out attack on Muslims in Mostar forcing them into a pocket on the east bank of the city. In the predawn hours, the HVO rounded up the remaining Muslims on the west bank and put them in squalid detention camps. Although

many detainees were eventually released, hundreds of men were taken to another camp and held. After allowing a portion of the Muslim population to go to the other side, the HVO laid siege to the Muslim-held east bank. HVO forces routinely denied access by humanitarian convoys until the U.S. forced the issue with an airdrop of food in late August.¹⁴¹

The Croats are afraid that the international community won't protect them in difficult situations. Therefore, they believe that creating their own state (Herzeg-Bosna), or one joined to Croatia, is the only solution that will provide them protection.

To achieve their goals, Croat leaders are:

- Attempting to reach a separate agreement with the Serbs;
- Taking military action in concert with the Serbs;
- Denying the Bosnians the arms and supplies that they need to fight the Serbs (and now the HVO);
- Forcing the Muslims out of the areas where they have significant populations (i.e., ethnic cleansing).

MYTHS, MISCONCEPTIONS, AND PROPAGANDA

A college history professor once told me that heroic myths, momentous misconceptions, and "big lie" propaganda are the engines that drive wars; the Bosnian War is no exception. But the participants — the warriors, their neighbors and supporters, and worse, even the peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers — have elevated distortion of facts and reality to a new level.

As is common in lands where the populations have long been subjugated by outsiders,

the people of the Balkans all view themselves as long suffering victims of historical circumstance. Blended into the myths of persecution are the legends of rebels and rebellions — most unsuccessful — and of the blood feuds that only wars that arise between people of the same origin can produce. Most of the heroes of the region are tainted; many were collaborators, traitors, or oppressors of their own people — facts that the heroic legends deftly sidestep.¹⁴² The bending of history in this manner seems to have set a pattern and created a willingness within many segments of the population to believe the most incredible distortions of truth and accept bald lies at face value.

An understanding of these myths and their influence on the on-going war provides key insights into the causes of the conflict, and, more importantly, the difficulties facing policymakers attempting to bring an end to the violence. The discussion that follows addresses several of the more important myths and misconceptions and their pernicious hold on the region and the combatants.

Common Myths

The Serbs as the Principal Victims

In the Balkans, probably more than in any other place, the people have elevated their persecution complex to a national pastime. All parties pose as victims rather than victimizers, and proclaim that their crimes have been exaggerated while those of their enemies have been downplayed.¹⁴³ This sense of "historical injury" has been used to justify the perpetration of all sorts of human rights abuses. One humanitarian worker, listening to a Serb and Croat debating over which group had been more oppressed over the last five hundred years, said that the Balkan peoples were nothing more than "professional victims."¹⁴⁴

Of the three main groups, the Serb's persecution complex has grown out of all sense of proportion. From a Serb perspective, they are the most persecuted people in the world; despite what the Western media might say, they are the victims, not the aggressors, of the Bosnian War. They regard Serbian history as a tragic record of suffering at the hands of others and the current war only another chapter. Because they have suffered in the past, they believe that their actions today are justified and are a form of preventive self-defense.¹⁴⁵

The Serbs' sense of persecution dates back to the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 when they were defeated by the Turks and lost their independence. For five hundred years they cultivated a sense of resentment and animosity towards Islam, in general, and the Turks and Bosnian Muslims in particular. Then, after the two world wars, they added Austria, Hungary, and Germany to their list of enemies whom they believe are set against their struggle for self-determination. Today, this is manifested in the Serbs hatred for Croatia and its "sponsor," Germany.¹⁴⁶

Whatever the historic reality, current Serb perceptions have made them susceptible to the worst kind of manipulation. This manipulation began in 1987 when Milošević exploited the strong anti-Albanian sentiment among Serbs about Kosovo as a means of toppling his rival in the Communist Party. This tactic of using a nationalist question for personal political gain signaled the beginning of the intercommunal troubles.¹⁴⁷ What started out as wild, unsubstantiated claims that Muslims in Kosovo were raping Serb women was perverted into a justification for gross human rights abuses there and later in Bosnia. The distortion has so warped the Serbs' sense of right and wrong that they justify, and have

institutionalized, murder, organized rape, torture, and forced population transfers (i.e., ethnic cleansing) as instruments of war. Because they believe that they have suffered in the past, many Serbs believe that they are once again the victims and that their actions are defensive. This belief may not be true, but their attitude must be taken into account in any attempt to bring peace to the region.

Serb Invincibility

Many observers of the war, looking at a map depicting lines of confrontation several months after the war began, were amazed at the amount of territory that the Serbs held after so short a period. They assumed that to capture so large an area that the Serbs must be fierce fighters and good tacticians. That, and the string of victories that followed, led them to overrate the BSA. In fact, the amount of land that the Serbs have captured since the outbreak of the war has not changed substantially. Remembering that the Serbs (and Croats) were largely rural people in Bosnia and that they owned the bulk of the farmland, it is easy to see why they were able to quickly grab control of such a large percentage of the land area. From the surrounding rural areas they were able to lay siege to towns and villages and, with the vast arsenal that the JNA passed on to them, were able to overpower the small, unarmed populations within. That, along with a terror campaign against the civilian population which drove millions of people from their homes, made it look like they were unbeatable.

The Serbs, especially those in the Krajina, do have a tradition of arms and during the Yugoslav period had the highest percentage of the troops serving in the armed forces. The JNA's senior officer corps was overwhelmingly Serb and many of those were from Bosnia

and the Krajina.¹⁴⁸ Thus at the outbreak of hostilities, the Serb faction was able to obtain a large measure of support from the JNA. This has included: battlefield support such as JNA troops, air cover and aerial resupply, armor and artillery support; equipment supply; fuel and logistical support; and sharing of communications and intelligence. In short, the BSA has had all the advantages that patronage of a modern military establishment can bring while at the same time, their opponents have been under a strict arms embargo.¹⁴⁹

Despite their many advantages, the Serbs are not particularly better, nor worse, fighters than their opponents. With all their military superiority, they have captured very little new ground and that mainly against underarmed and poorly defended villages. In the winter, their performance deteriorated significantly, the Bosnians were able to open overland routes to many of the besieged enclaves because the Serb commanders could not get their troops to conduct patrols during the cold nights.

Bosnians as Poor Fighters

Just as the Serbs have been portrayed as invincible, the Bosnians have been depicted as poor fighters and inept soldiers. It is true that they are the weakest. They are outnumbered in artillery and armor several hundred to one, use homemade weapons and munitions, and often have only enough small arms ammunition to give each soldier one clip. Yet they have been able to hold their own in many areas and have surrendered territory only after bitter fights and in some cases they have been able to improve their lines (e.g., around Sarajevo).

In the debate over whether to lift the embargo and provide arms to the Bosnians, opponents often argue that the Bosnians lack of military experience would inhibit their ability

to use the sophisticated weapons that could put their forces on an equal basis with the Serbs. This argument overlooks the fact that while they may not have been well represented in the old JNA, the Bosnians were the predominant group involved in the Yugoslav arms industry.¹⁵⁰ Tito used his position as a leader of the Non-Aligned movement to establish a leading role in the international arms trade. Most of Yugoslavia's market was in the Islamic world, (including Iraq and Libya). To make the clients feel at ease, Tito encouraged Bosnian Muslims to take a lead role in the manufacture and export of weapons and military support equipment. Some examples of Bosnia-based military technology included: manufacturing of aircraft, tanks, artillery, and vehicles; munitions; design and manufacturing of optical sights and tracking devices; manufacturing of a variety of light missiles; and various military electronics. Because of their prewar expertise, the Bosnians have been able to set up a limited arms manufacturing industry to support their forces.

Misconceptions

Outsiders have had a hard time defining the nature of the war. Terms such as "ethnic cleansing" tend to give the impression that it is between different ethnic groups while those who claim that it is not ethnic tend to depict it as a civil war. Both are incorrect. The problem is: it is both of these, and much more.

The Conflict as an Ethnic War

The term "ethnic group" applies to people who belong to a distinct group sharing a common language, culture and characteristics; therefore, an ethnic war would be between *different* ethnic groups. The people of Bosnia share a common ancestry, a common language, and virtually identical customs, living habits and characteristics, but they see

themselves as dramatically different. The Muslims are not "Turks" as the Serbs imply, they are the descendants of Slavs who converted to Islam largely for economic reasons. People who call themselves "Bosnians" come from all three religions, Catholic, Muslim, and Orthodox. While Serbs are Orthodox and Croats are usually Roman Catholic, the religious overtones of the war are fairly muted. In fact, this is a war of territorial aspirations by two parties — Serbia and Croatia — and an ethnic feud among Slavs.

The Conflict as a Civil War

To describe the conflict as a civil war is also incorrect. Some Serbs like to describe their reasons for fighting as an attempt to preserve Yugoslavia and to depict the conflict as a civil war (in the same character as the American Civil War). First, Serb (and now Croat) stated war aims belie this claim. In January 1991, Milošević stated that if Yugoslavia were to break up, Serbia would demand territory from its neighbors.¹⁵¹ A month later, on 8 February,¹⁵² he reiterated that if Yugoslavia should break up, Serbia would incorporate all Serb areas outside Serbia into one state. Much of the Serbian effort since then has been to expand the borders to form a "Greater Serbia."¹⁵³

Second, the war can hardly be characterized as a civil war on international legal grounds. Bosnia was recognized as a sovereign, independent state by the United Nations, the United States, the European Community, and virtually every other international body. While Belgrade never recognized the secession, the fact remains that the war began when the JNA opened fire on the Bosnians while it was encamped there after withdrawing from Croatia. Furthermore, much of the war has been prosecuted by the JNA acting under the cover of the BSA and the war has largely been directed from Belgrade.

Senior military officers have used the "civil war" label as a means of dissuading Western political leaders from intervening. What they are implying is that the war is similar to Vietnam, a war where the enemies were unseen and allies uncertain. The veiled threat is that this could become a guerrilla war carried out by the Serb/"Partisans." In fact, the war is far from a guerrilla war; the lines are well defined, there is little behind the lines activity of any sort, and everyone knows the territory that their side is holding. In this respect it is similar to the American Civil War, there are distinct armies, definable fronts, and a lot of trench warfare. If intervention were to take place, it would not be hard to find out where the allies' friends were located and the type of warfare would be conventional, not irregular.

"All Sides Are Equally Bad"

"A sure sign that someone is new on the scene, a poor student of the situation, or very naive is when he makes that statement."¹⁵⁴

In mid-1993, it became popular for UNPROFOR officers to tell the press that all sides were equally guilty of committing war crimes and atrocities.¹⁵⁵ While it is true that BiH troops carried out attacks on withdrawing JNA forces in Sarajevo, and that a number of civilians and POWs have been massacred, the numbers are small in comparison with what they have been subjected to. While Serb and Croat forces pounded Bosnian cities and villages, Muslim artillery focused primarily on military targets. This, in no way, excuses the Bosnia-Herzegovina forces from their actions. Moreover, as one commander explained, "if you are fighting for a multinational society, you can't go around blowing up the other side's villages."¹⁵⁶

UNPROFOR claimed in August 1993 that the BiH was guilty of its own campaign of

ethnic cleansing in Central Bosnia citing the fact that dozens of villages had been abandoned due to BiH military activity.¹⁵⁷ However, they neglected to report that the government, and often the military, had attempted a number of strategies to try to keep the people from leaving the villages. While it is true that thousands of people have been displaced by the fighting, it is important to make a distinction between the flight of refugees moving out of harm's way and a policy of ethnic cleansing and forced population transfers of the type carried out by the Serbs.

In order to put the conflict in perspective, it is important to look at how the war developed, where the preponderance of responsibility lies, the comparative magnitude of war crimes, population transfers, and the type of tactics used by all sides. No dispassionate observer could fail to conclude that the preponderance of responsibility for the war falls on the ultranationalists of the Serb side. And it is not just coincidence that an international war crimes tribunal has been set up, principally to investigate the behavior of the Serbs.¹⁵⁸ It is true that all sides have misbehaved, but all sides are *not* equally guilty.

Some observers have said that the only reason that the Bosnian forces have not carried out more atrocities is that being on the defensive, they have not had the chance to do so.¹⁵⁹ Given the record of soldiers in the Balkans and the fact that hatreds are long-held and can take the form of vendettas, that statement may be true. However, the leadership of the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina recognizes that the country they envision cannot be built on such a legacy and that if they want to have any chance of permanent peace within the prewar borders, they cannot permit the army to carry out reprisals or mistreat civilians. Furthermore, they realize that international support for Bosnia is dependent on grabbing and

holding the "moral high ground" in the conflict.¹⁶⁰ Thus, the principal problem they face in the war is how to control over-zealous small unit commanders and the volunteer Islamic forces that have come from abroad.

Muslims are Fundamentalists

One of the most successful propaganda ploys of the Serbs has been their effort to paint the Bosnians as "Muslim fundamentalists." According to the Serbs, the Bosnians are the spearhead of fundamentalism; if they get a large, viable country, the Muslims will eventually push the Christians out (by force or as a result of a large birthrate) and create an Islamic state in the heart of Europe.¹⁶¹ Using Bosnia as a base, extremists would launch a campaign to unite the Muslims of Europe and undermine Western institutions and Christian governments. As evidence, the Serbs point out that Alija Izetbegović, the President of Bosnia, once wrote a pamphlet on an Islamic state in Bosnia and was jailed by the Yugoslav government for inciting dissension.¹⁶²

The likelihood that Bosnia would become an Islamic state is remote. First, only 43 percent of the prewar population was Muslim and few of those were considered "practicing" religionists. The Muslims of Bosnia are westernized even more than those of Turkey — in some circles they are referred to as "Euro-Muslims." Few observe traditional Islamic diets, most drink alcohol, and many observe Christian holidays more than Islamic ones. In all other aspects they are Slavs and Europeans. Rural Bosnians are generally more faithful to the tenets of Islam than their urban cousins but they are far from fundamentalists.¹⁶³

The high percentage of mixed marriages would make it difficult for Bosnia to become

an Islamic state. One-third of the marriages in the country are mixed, and as the war has polarized some sections of the country, those in mixed marriages have found that Bosnia, with its tradition of multiethnic society, is the best and safest place for them. As Serbs and Croats leave, the offspring of mixed marriages will be the largest single group in the country, reinforcing this trend.

There are, of course, extremists in every society and Bosnia has its share. Some Muslims, scornful of the limited military aid they have received from the West have turned to the Arab states and Iran for help. There have also been an increasing number of Muslim volunteers joining the Bosnian army from abroad: Mujahidin from Afghanistan and Hizbollah from Iran; and instructors from various other Islamic countries.¹⁶⁴ After months of maintaining a low profile, several Mujahidin units were formed within the Bosnian army in the central zone. This has caused the government no end of problems with the West and given the Serbs and Croats support for their propaganda mill. However, the troops are fierce fighters and the government is not willing to disband them.

Perhaps the most disturbing facet of the propaganda war is how readily people on all sides accept the most outrageous lies and take false information at face value. For example, Serbs in the Krajina and eastern Bosnia claim that Serbian newspapers and magazines had been banned prior to the war.¹⁶⁵ There is no evidence to support the claim. Serb authorities claim that they have lists of families slating men and children for execution and the women for rape, but the lists have never been produced. Croats claim¹⁶⁶ that there are regiments of Russian soldiers in the Bosnian Serb army — but no UN, EC, or NATO source has ever detected any such formations.

When people are willing to accept the small lies, the big ones become easier to swallow. Wild claims about Muslim fundamentalism, Croatian fascism, Chetniks, all circulate without the slightest challenge. What is so hard for outsiders to understand is that in many cases the people who accept the lies at face value are people who lived harmoniously in mixed communities for all their lives. How, ask outsiders, can the hate be so readily whipped up, how can the people believe such incredible lies?

These myths and misconceptions are deeply rooted, they have religious undertones and historical facts firmly woven into them, and they may take generations to die out.

MILITARY OPTIONS

On 6 May 1994, U.S. Ambassador Charles Redman walked into my office at the Residency compound in Sarajevo. He had a broad smile. "We've got an agreement", he said. Immediately he picked up the secure telephone and called U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Like Redman, Christopher was elated. Bosnian President Izetbegovic had finally agreed to a 51/49 percent partition of Bosnia. Redman remarked, "they said it couldn't be done." The next morning Redman drove to Pale with the proposal in hand, only to have Karadzic tell him to "stuff it".¹⁶⁷ Thus ended yet another diplomatic attempt to reach a peace.

With little likelihood of peace through diplomacy, a variety of military options have been proposed to bring an end to the war. They range from passive support of the Bosnians to full scale military intervention with air and ground troops. As the conflict has worn on, the options available have changed. The following is a summary and brief assessment of the most common proposals.

Lifting the Arms Embargo

The step most often advocated by Bosnia's supporters is lifting the arms embargo of Bosnia. Proponents point out that Bosnia has sufficient manpower to fight but insufficient weapons to arm them.¹⁶⁸ Advocates also suggest several weapons systems that could be provided to the Bosnians that would equalize the fight or serve as "force multipliers:" 1) light antitank weapons; 2) smart mortars; 3) shoulder-launched antiaircraft missiles; 4) counterbattery radars; and 5) artillery pieces.¹⁶⁹

Critics of the proposal fall into two categories; those that believe it is too late to supply arms and that it will take too long to train the Bosnians to use the more sophisticated weapons systems; and those that fear lifting the embargo will only encourage Serbia's supporters, especially the Russians, to increase clandestine shipments of arms to the JNA and Bosnian Serbs, thus increasing the level of violence without substantially changing the overall outcome. There is also the parallel problem of what to do about Croatia; should it be included or excluded from the lifting of the embargo? Another question is whether to arm the HVO, especially after the fighting between the Bosnians and Croats that has occurred since the Vance-Owen plan was announced.¹⁷⁰

The principal counter to the argument that it would take too long for the Bosnians to learn how to use the sophisticated weapons systems is the very high level of education of many of the officers and NCOs in the Bosnian and HVO forces. One should remember that almost half of the Yugoslav arms industry was located in Bosnia.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, large quantities of Soviet-made weapons (e.g. from captured Iraqi stores or the international market) with which Bosnian troops who served in the JNA are familiar should be available for distribution.

Supporters of lifting the embargo believe that supplying the weapons could help unify Bosnian and HVO forces; i.e., they should be supplied on the condition that the two forces form a united command. But the long-term implications of that approach are not certain; Bosnian and HVO troops might cooperate to get the guns, but later split and resume fighting each other.¹⁷² There is also the problem of how to regulate arms deliveries to the two groups in such a way that they support long-term political objectives, i.e., the majority of the

weapons would need to go to the Bosnian government's forces — something that could create friction between the two groups.

MILITARY INTERVENTION

As Serb aggression and atrocities have mounted, there have been increasing calls for military intervention by the West to end the killing. There are some strong arguments both for and against outside military involvement.

Arguments Against

Those who oppose intervention do so on many grounds. Politically, some argue that it is a civil war. They downplay Bosnia's recognition and the fact that the JNA has been an active participant on the side of the BSA and stress that the majority of the fighting is between militia units that draw their support from nearby villages. In citing the civil war element, they draw on the history of the Balkans, the long-standing rivalries of the various national groups, and the religious hatreds that have been revived after only a short interlude of Communism.¹⁷³ Opponents of intervention argue that in such a conflict, the only thing is for the various sides to slug it out until they are all tired of fighting or only one side remains standing. They believe that an intervening outside force would soon become the target of all the warring parties and that it could be bogged down for years. They draw an analogy to the American involvement in Vietnam and warn that engagement could require hundreds of thousands of troops and an extended commitment.¹⁷⁴

Some Americans have begged off, depicting the former Yugoslavia as a European problem. Politicians, hoping for an economic revival and benefit from the "peace dividends" of the ending of the Cold War, are staunchly opposed to U.S. involvement. Even one of the

strongest supporters of intervention in the U.S. Senate, Senator Joseph Biden, reports that he has very little support for military action from his constituents.¹⁷⁵

Some Western diplomats fear that allied intervention could aggravate political problems in Russia. Many Russians support the Serbian position in the conflict and there are strong historical ties exist between the two countries. Conservatives opposing Boris Yeltsin have used his support for the West's position favoring Croatia and Bosnia as a tool against him. Military intervention, they argue, could bring him down if the Russian public, or the pro-Serb Russian army, were aroused by the action.¹⁷⁶

Arguments for Intervention

Advocates for intervention point out that a war anywhere in Europe is too dangerous to ignore. Historically, wars in the Balkans have spread quickly to their immediate neighbors and become international. At this juncture in history, with the ending of the Cold War, the forces that restrained ethnic or national hostilities have waned and old hatreds, territorial claims, and nationalistic aspirations could easily resurface. As Europe is largely an unassimilated mix of ethnic, religious, and national groups, permitting a war arising from these stirrings is very dangerous for the remainder of Europe.¹⁷⁷

Proponents of intervention counter the "civil war/internal affair" argument by pointing out that it is both technically and militarily an aggression by one country against another. But even if it were a civil war, it is not a guerrilla war like Vietnam or Somalia — the front lines in Bosnia are clear and an intervening force would be able to recognize opposing forces. One advocate of military action draws an analogy not to Indochina but to northern Iraq where allied forces were able to quickly force the Iraqis to withdraw from large areas of

Kurdistan and permit a small allied force to successfully end human rights abuses and repatriate over a million refugees — without firing a shot.¹⁷⁸

One observer also points out that other countries are watching to see how the West responds to this type of conflict.¹⁷⁹ Not only are despots like Saddam Hussein likely to be following Western moves with keen interest, but even Russia must be looking for insights into Western behavior as they try to address their own nationalities questions. As one observer noted, "Russia is Yugoslavia with nukes."¹⁸⁰ If the West cannot deal with Bosnia, how will it deal with a similar situation in the former Soviet Union?

For the UN, intervention is literally a requirement. The Charter of the UN not only gives sanction to intervention when a member state is attacked, it specifies that all nations have an obligation to intervene to end the aggression.¹⁸¹ While it does not specify the type of intervention, if the UN, and the permanent members of the Security Council, fail to take action now that the restrictions of the Cold War are over, the entire concept of collective security is dead.

For the Europeans, the war can be seen as a litmus test of 1) European ideals and promises that racism and genocide would not be tolerated, especially in modern, cultured, Europe; and 2) a test of the potential for economic and political integration — as Francois Mitterand said, "of Maastricht itself."¹⁸² In a situation in which the overriding sentiment in Europe opposed military involvement, the Europeans have taken only one substantive decision since the war began -- recognition of Bosnia. Support for self-determination without a firm commitment by European leaders to protect ethnic minorities and punish acts of aggression is irresponsible. Virtually all of Europe's actions since 1992 have been in the

form of humanitarian aid to besieged civilians and economic sanctions against Serbia.

For NATO, military intervention in Bosnia is a test of whether that organization has a post-Cold War role or is an irrelevant, overly expensive organization. Exercises like the no-fly zone enforcement have done little to generate confidence in its continued existence.

For the U.S., intervention could be seen as a test of its willingness to remain engaged in Europe in the post-Cold War period.

In the end, however, the most compelling reason is still that it is the most humane thing to do. Stopping the fighting and ending the killing is simply the right thing to do. The question is, how?

Allies Concerns

Some nations contributing troops to UNPROFOR have objected to intervention, on the grounds that it could put their forces at risk to retaliation from the Serbs. The recent events in Pale confirm this as a legitimate concern. While, most UNPROFOR bases are in Bosnian Muslim areas where they would be relatively safe from retaliation, the forces outside those areas would have to be relocated to bases in safe areas and wait and see the results of the Sarajevo operation. The French troops in Sarajevo, by definition, would be protected under the plan. The only places where retaliation might be possible would be in Srebrenica, Žepa, and Pale, against the British and Canadians. However, those areas are already designated as safe areas (and DMZs) and forces there are protected under existing provisions and rules of engagement. A *demarche* to the Serbs could be structured to warn them not to violate the cease-fire in those towns. Of course, as was the case recently in Pale, there would be no guarantee of Serb compliance.

Second, the military situation has changed now that allied air forces, especially close air support fighters, are in the area. The planes already have a mandate to protect UN troops on the ground. If the Serbs engage UNPROFOR, they would be attacked by the air assets on station. A continuous CAP/CAS during the initial stages of the operation would add significantly to deterring Serb action.

Some countries have demanded "risk sharing" in the form of American ground forces before any U.S. proposals for air strikes could be accepted.¹⁸³ The commitment of U.S. forces should not be a *quid pro quo*, it should depend on the type of intervention that is carried out. If the scale and area of the action is limited and small, the most effective U.S. military commitment would be air support. If however, a full scale military operation were to take place, the U.S. should be morally bound to participate.

Intervention Proposals

-- Reconfiguration of UNPROFOR

The mandate of UNPROFOR is to escort and protect UNHCR convoys. A number of countries believe that the best way to provide assistance to the Bosnians is to change the mandate of UNPROFOR to include protection of civilian populations and preventing population expulsions. This would require that the United Nations seek a Security Council mandate to conduct peacemaking operations and then to reconfigure the forces on the ground. Heavily armed UN forces would place themselves between the combatants and demand a cessation of hostilities. The force would be permitted to fire only if fired upon but would have sufficient firepower and, presumably, air support to return fire and defend themselves.

This proposal was put forward in the early stages of the war when the level of

Bosnian Serb forces was relatively small and their firepower was limited. As the conflict spread, support for the idea dwindled. However, the Vance-Owen plan essentially adopted the idea, but held reconfiguration and expansion of UNPROFOR until the implementation phase of the accord; i.e., after the agreement is signed and all sides have agreed to peace.¹⁸⁴ Thus, the role of the force would be peacekeeping not peacemaking.

The number of troops needed under this plan is widely debated. In a peacemaking role, there are two schools of thought. The first is that the force would immediately have to engage in combat operations and would need to be very robust; the number most often quoted is 100,000 to 150,000 soldiers¹⁸⁵ (the smaller number depending on whether combat air support were provided). The second school claims that if the force were made up of highly-trained, air mobile infantry troops operating with close air support, and helicopter gunships, that the number would be far less, perhaps 35,000 to 50,000.¹⁸⁶

Deployment under a plan similar to the Vance-Owen plan may require considerably more troops than a military effort aimed primarily at stopping the fighting along the existing lines of confrontation. That is because under Vance-Owen, 1) troops would need to be deployed in every part of the country to police each of the ten cantons and 2) forces would have to be on hand to prevent fighting between refugees migrating. In this scenario, a protection force would not be able to use force multipliers or air power, but would have to rely mainly on infantry, light armor, and military police. The British have privately estimated that to prevent massive bloodshed in the three thousand Bosnia-Herzegovina villages will require a protective force of over 200,000 soldiers.

-- Safe Havens Protected by Air Support

Protecting designated "safe havens" by air power. Advocated by both senior military officers and various U.S. humanitarian agencies,¹⁸⁷ was actively explored in the late spring of 1993. In this plan, the remaining Bosnian areas would be declared safe havens and Serb forces would receive a *demarche* to withdraw and to cease all artillery, tank and rocket attacks. In the *demarche*, they would be instructed to withdraw to proscribed areas by a certain time, after which any remaining forces would be subject to air attack. The military objective would be to stop the killing (though it could only be enforced in the safe havens) and to equalize the forces on the lines of engagement. In later versions of the plan (since the introduction of Canadian troops in Srebrenica), UN forces would also be sent into the smaller and weaker enclaves as a protective force to stop small arms fire and to prevent reprisals and local fighting.

Politically, such a move would deprive the Serbs of a quick military victory, and might convince them to return to the peace table and adopt a more realistic negotiating posture. Some supporters of the approach believe it is a necessary prerequisite to the resumption of peace talks.¹⁸⁸ Tactically, the approach would be fairly easy to implement; the Serbs are not particularly adept at concealing their equipment and the United States and its allies have surveillance and tracking systems that will enable most heavy artillery and tanks to be quickly silenced. The threat to allied aircraft providing air support is minimal — the allies are familiar with everything the JNA employs and have developed sufficient countermeasures. However, the main problem is that bombing alone, especially if it is limited to Bosnian territory, will not stop the war. The aircraft must work in coordination with ground troops to be successful. The only ground forces available now are the Bosnians,

who cannot effectively coordinate with air, and UNPROFOR, which is not presently configured for a combat role. Thus, bombing would have only a short-term effect on the Serbs.

Given these problems, most military analysts believe that a limited safe havens strategy could only be successful if the Western allies were to threaten a broader bombing campaign if the Serbs were to continue the fight. This could include bombing Serbian military supply lines or conducting punitive raids on Serbian civilian infrastructure.

-- Lift and Strike

A variation of air strikes to protect safe havens is the so called "lift and strike" proposal offered by the U.S. in April of 1993. Under this plan, the arms embargo on Bosnia would be lifted and air strikes would be threatened in order to stop the fighting — and carried out if the Serbs ignored the *demarche* to cease firing. The proposal was half-heartedly carried to the Europeans by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and died when they rejected it.¹⁸⁹ This option is still alive in the U.S. Senate, although recently ignored as a serious proposal.

-- Interdiction of Serbian Supply Lines

The Bosnian Serbs receive over 85 percent of their supplies from JNA sources.¹⁹⁰ The material is delivered via truck and helicopter. Many of the supplies are stockpiled just across the border in Serbia and others come from military bases that can be clearly identified. The supply routes used by the JNA and BSA are well known and could be interdicted by air. Therefore, some analysts have proposed that air strikes be carried out against supply depots, transport infrastructure, and fuel dumps supporting the Serbian forces.

The terrain works for and against this approach. The mountain roads used by the trucks cross many bridges that could be cut both in Bosnia and Serbia. There are also many open areas where trucks could be attacked from the air. However, thick forests provide good concealment and a determined ground force could ferry supplies by small vehicles, by pack animals (as the Bosnians do), or by human carriers. Interdiction could make the war costly for the Serbs, but alone, it could have only a limiting effect.

-- Punitive Military Action Against Serbia (via Air Strikes)

Some observers have posited that the best way to end the war in Bosnia and to bring the Bosnian Serbs to the conference table is to take the war to Serbia.¹⁹¹ They argue that the crux of the problem is in the pan-Serb movement fueled and abetted by the Serb government and the JNA and that until these groups are punished, they will continue to fuel the war. In the main, these officers advocate punitive air strikes against Serbia proper. One concept is to attack Serbia's economic and strategic infrastructure — power lines, railway lines and bridges, communications facilities, road bridges, etc. In this scenario, Serbia would be economically punished for supporting the war and deliveries of supplies to the Bosnian Serbs would be slowed while civilian casualties would be minimized. Proponents argue that this option, coupled with existing economic sanctions and a full blockade, would convince the Serbs to abandon the fight.¹⁹²

The other school of thought is that strategic military targets should be included. Military bases, ammunition dumps, fuel depots, tank parks, airfields and planes would all be destroyed. Some advocates of this approach argue for one overwhelming bombing campaign such as the one in Desert Storm; others have suggested a progressively escalating campaign,

the theory being that the Serbs would quickly come to the negotiating table to save the rest of their army.¹⁹³ Humanitarian groups have generally supported the first approach¹⁹⁴ for they believe that if the JNA retains any power, it will be able to continue to subjugate Kosovo and Vojvodina and to later threaten Macedonia. U.S., British, and Russian diplomats argue that destroying Serbia militarily will lead to chaos in the country and subject it to attacks and land grabbing by Croatia.¹⁹⁵

The proposals for punitive air attacks fly in the face of lessons learned from previous air campaigns. Aerial bombardment usually serves to unify a populace and to strengthen their resolve, not lessen it. Even attacks against civil populations, as in World War II, have been spectacularly unsuccessful.¹⁹⁶ A progressive bombing campaign would give the Serbs time to disperse and conceal their armaments and develop countermeasures to the air strikes.

-- Full-scale Military Intervention

Among senior military and civilian leaders, there is a belief that the only way that the war in Bosnia can be ended, and future conflicts in other areas prevented, is to impose a comprehensive, all-Yugoslavia solution on all the parties.¹⁹⁷ This solution would address the question of borders, minority guarantees, and independence/autonomy for Kosovo. The officers argue that stopping the violence in Bosnia alone cannot prevent it from breaking out in other areas. They point out that undercurrents of nationalism have been unleashed that could spark spontaneous conflict in other areas and that unresolved issues between Croatia and Serbia could reignite fighting between those two countries. Unless these tensions are anticipated and held in check, so they argue, any military intervention would only exacerbate the situation and soon provoke fighting in other areas.¹⁹⁸

If military intervention is deemed to be in the national (or international) interest, then overwhelming force should be committed to the task. A variety of scenarios are possible, but all entail the threat, and, if necessary, the commitment, of combined regular military forces operating under a UN Security Council mandate (though not as a UN force). While the United States would like to see the Europeans and other countries provide the ground force with American participation limited to air and logistics support, the reality is that no other Western nation has sufficient troops and combat support capability to lead such an operation on the ground.¹⁹⁹

Military intervention could take several forms. Troops could be sent to Bosnia to reinforce the Bosnian army at strategic locations and push the Serbs back. The ground force would be supported by tactical and, if necessary, strategic air. The objectives would be:

- To take the war to Serbia and force the government to capitulate by destroying its ability to make war;
- To expel the Serbs from areas they have taken by force or ethnic cleansing;
- To disarm the Serbs and *all irregular forces*;
- To place protective forces between ethnic communities;
- To reinstate Bosnian government authority over all areas of the country; and
- To force all parties back to the conference table but with the allied forces able to impose conditions.

Proponents of this scenario believe that Serbian capitulation and forcing a change of government is the only way to prevent Serb aggression in Croatia and Macedonia, resolve the problem of Kosovo, and prevent further human rights abuses in other areas of Serbia.²⁰⁰

The principal drawback to this approach is the number of troops that would be required and the scale of the operation; it would take a commitment equivalent to Desert Storm — something that is not likely at present. For Americans, an operation of this magnitude would require congressional approval which could not be obtained without broad popular support, something that is doubtful at the moment.²⁰¹

-- Introduction of Allied Military Forces (Humanitarian Intervention)

Several American and British officers have proposed that a military operation styled after Operation Provide Comfort, the 1991 allied effort to assist the Kurds, be staged.²⁰² The operation was different from a usual military campaign in that the objectives were limited, the force was relatively small, the deployment of troops was announced in advance and was carried out sequentially and the threat of force was used creatively to put the opposing force off balance. The objectives were to stop the attacks on the Kurds, provide space for the refugees who had fled the area to return in safety, and to provide a safe environment for relief agencies to work. An unstated objective was to cool the situation down so that the warring parties could reopen negotiations.²⁰³ This type of operation, which is styled as "humanitarian intervention," could work as follows:

First an aerial exclusion or no-fly zone would be imposed over the tactical area on a scale sufficient to permit any opposing aircraft to be detected and intercepted.

Next, notice of an allied deployment in specified areas would be given to the Serbs along with a *demarche* ordering them to withdraw all their forces to designated areas by a certain date and time. Tanks and artillery would be parked and demobilized in those zones and only a small protective force would be permitted to remain in the immediate vicinity.

Regular troops would be instructed to return to designated barracks and irregular forces would be instructed to disband and return to their homes. Any forces not complying by the designated hour would be subject to attack without question.

Compliance would be closely monitored. As soon as evidence of compliance was detected, allied forces would deploy to the designated areas. If the Serbs stalled, certain units would be selected for nonviolent demonstrations of the allies' ability to detect and destroy them (such as sonic overflights, pinpointing troop or artillery positions with armed helicopters, etc.). Only if they failed to withdraw would they be attacked, and then only as necessary to demonstrate allied capabilities and intent.

The allied deployment would move swiftly and determinedly. The objective would be to establish a pattern of forcing the Serbs to concede territory and withdrawing peacefully to preselected areas. At each step they would be put at a tactical disadvantage. By using this approach, the total combat force required would be relatively small because as soon as an area was secured, the main combat force would be redeployed to the next area, leaving only a small security force in place (possibly a reconfigured UN force).

The allied deployment would be limited to the main areas of contact between Bosnian and Serb forces and to Serb-controlled areas where large Muslim populations remain. At the end of the operation, a contiguous area in Central Bosnia would be secured, and the remaining Serb forces would be largely confined to traditional Serb areas. As in northern Iraq, a zone of influence would be established that would be larger than the actual area occupied by the allied troops; the zone of influence would be patrolled by fighters but not occupied by ground troops.

As soon as the area was secured, efforts would be made to stimulate a massive return and repatriation of displaced persons and refugees. (Only if the areas are reoccupied, can each group negotiate from a normal position.)

As soon as the repatriation was complete, allied troops would turn over control of the area to a UN peacekeeping force configured to protect the civil population (a portion of the allied force could be transferred to the UN if necessary). Initially, the forces would be withdrawn to nearby positions so that they could be reintroduced if needed.

The objectives of humanitarian intervention would be:

- To stop the fighting;
- To deprive the Serbs of military advantage and reverse their territorial gains;
- To cool tempers and allow for a return of populations;
- To prepare the way for a reconfiguration of the UN force and its deployment;
- To create a new situation on the ground prior to the reopening of peace talks.

The advantages of this approach is that it is the least violent, requires the least commitment of combat troops, and can be implemented relatively quickly. It builds on the successful experience of Operation Provide Comfort. It can attain limited objectives and avoid a long protracted ground war. The handoff to UN forces permits an early withdrawal of the majority of ground elements and leaves strategic security largely in the hands of the air forces.

The primary risk is that the Serbs resist and have to be attacked; therefore, the allies must be prepared to use force if necessary. However, if the *demarches* make the military

penalties for noncompliance clear and the allies intimate that targets would not necessarily be limited to the immediate theater of operations (i.e., they could be in Serbia itself), the Serbs are likely to back down. Furthermore, at the outset of the operation, the Serbs will not know the full extent of the area that the allies intend to take and will probably be willing to withdraw believing that it will be limited.

SUMMARY

There are many military options available to policy makers. Whether one would be more successful than another, or even successful at all, is something that can never be foreseen with any accuracy. However, there are some lessons from previous interventions (Operation Provide Comfort, northern Iraq; Operation Restore Hope, Somalia; the multinational force in Lebanon) that may apply.²⁰⁴

- Force levels should be tailored to the situation. In Somalia, the force was too large; it was unwieldy and too slow to deploy to the areas where it was most needed.²⁰⁵ In a humanitarian intervention, large ground forces are not necessarily better. Smaller forces backed with air power are less provocative and usually more successful.
- Placement of forces is a key to success. In Lebanon and Somalia, forces were put in the wrong locations. They were ineffective and quickly became targets.
- Air power is an effective force multiplier. In northern Iraq, the planes were an ever-present symbol of allied determination and commitment to protect the Kurds.
- Issue clear, concise, and precise warnings to the commander(s) of opposing troops. Unlike a normal military operation where secrecy and stealth are

important, in a humanitarian intervention, allied forces want the opposing forces to know exactly what the next steps will be so that there are no mistakes.

- As long as the opposing forces behave as instructed, allied operations should be carried out in a repetitive manner that is predictable and routine. This reduces the chances of a local commander misinterpreting an allied move, especially in the early phases of deployment.
- Threats to use force should be minimized and not issued unless there is a willingness to use force and it can be authorized.

CONCLUSION

In the fall of 1991, at a U.S. ambassador's meeting in Berlin, Ambassador Warren Zimmerman was told that Yugoslavia had become a tar baby in Washington. Nobody wanted to touch it. With the American presidential election just a year away, it was seen as a loser.²⁰⁶ Unfortunately, American paralysis coincided with growing pressure on Bosnia. Neither Milosevic, Tudjman, nor Karadzic made any effort to conceal their designs on Bosnia from the West. As a place where Serbs, Croats, and Muslims had coexisted more or less peacefully for centuries, Bosnia was an affront and a challenge to these ethnic supremacists.

For his part, Tudjman proclaimed that Bosnia never really existed. It should be divided between Serbia and Croatia. Milosevic's strategy for Bosnia, unlike Tudjman's, was calculating rather than emotional. He contended that all those who wanted to "remain" in Yugoslavia should have the right to do so. This included the Serbs of Bosnia. Karadzic, the architect of massacres in the Muslim villages, ethnic cleansing, and artillery attacks on

civilian populations, invites comparison with a nationalist from another generation, Heinrich Himmler.

In his last conversation with Karadzic, before returning to Washington, Ambassador Zimmerman captured the essence of the man. As justification for his actions, he said; "You have to understand Serbs... They have been betrayed for centuries. Today they cannot live with other nations. They must have their own existence. They are a warrior race and they can trust only themselves to take by force what is their due. But this doesn't mean that Serbs can hate. Serbs are incapable of hatred." When Zimmerman pressed him further he proclaimed that Sarajevo would be the capital of the new Bosnian Serb republic. "The city will be divided into Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian sections, so that no ethnic groups will have to live or work together." And how will it be divided? "By walls," he said matter-of-factly. Zimmerman thought of Sarajevo, which for centuries had been a moving symbol of the civility that comes from people of different ethnicities living in harmony. Then he thought of Berlin, where the wall, which had symbolized all the hatreds and divisions of the Cold War, had been torn down just over a year before.

"Do you mean," he asked, "that Sarajevo will be like Berlin before the wall was destroyed?"

"Yes," he answered, "our vision of Sarajevo is like Berlin when the wall was still standing."²⁰⁷

ENDNOTES

1. Their separate evolution as two distinct peoples occurred when the Serbian bands were converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity by the monks Method and Cyril, and the western Slavs, the Croats, became Roman Catholics. Ferdinand Schevill, The History of the Balkan Peninsula from the Earliest Times to the Present Day (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1992), 25.
2. After Stefan Dushan defeated the Bulgars in the Battle of Kustendil in 1330 he became the "state builder". He severed ties with the Greek Church, then created the Serbian Orthodox Church and appointed its head, the Serbian patriarch to proclaim him tsar (emperor). He created an administration and set down a legal code (using the Cyrillic alphabet introduced by the father of Serbian Christianity, the monk Cyril). Ibid., 29.
3. Information provided for the previous three paragraphs is taken from Ibid., 33.
4. Bayezid, Murad's son and successor, did not destroy Serbia root and branch. He was content with the formal submission of the country under a native ruler whom he put in office. The Serbs mournfully hailed Kosovo as the grave of their liberty. Ibid., 47.
5. The "unity" of the event is a bit overdone: a key Serb lord, Vuk Brauković, joined the Ottomans and was a major factor in their victory. Frederick C. Cuny, The Bosnian War 1992-1993, The Opening Phase (Dallas: Intertext, 1994), 21.
6. Misha Glenny, The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War (New York: Penguin), 15-16.
7. Dedijer, et al., History of Yugoslavia, 261.
8. A heresy current in Bosnia at the end of the Middle Ages, brutally repressed by both the Orthodox and the Catholic clergies. Not much is known about the Bogomils. It appears that their beliefs in the need for a more simple clerical structure and a more communal society in the vein of other "socialist" heresies of the Middle Ages (the Cathars, the Albigeois, etc.) made them a threat for both the Orthodox and Catholic churches. By the fourteenth century, a Bosnian king went so far as to declare himself publicly a Bogomil, such were the numbers of Bogomils in his kingdom. Ibid., 27.

9. At Nis, the skulls of the Serb warriors defeated at the battle Of Cegar in 1809 were cemented into a gruesome tower at the center of the city. The Cele-kula; it once contained 952 skulls. Robert D. Kaplan, Balkan Ghosts (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1993), 15.

10. The Muslims have remained the commercial class of Bosnian society. After the Austrian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878, however, administrators and civil servants ceased being Muslim. In the early days of Austrian occupation, much of the administration posting devolved to Croats, while in the interwar and the Titoist periods, civil servants were predominantly Serbs. Schevill, 49.

11. In fact, the vast majority of all Bosnians, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, during the period were poor peasants, or raya in Turkish. But, because of the conditions outlined above, Muslims, in general, have been perceived as being better off economically than the Serbs. Cuny, 36.

12. A group of 70,000-80,000 people from Serbia and Montenegro, led by the Serb patriarch of Pec, Arsenije III. Kaplan, 35.

13. Misha Glenny, The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.

14. Ibid., 7.

15. In 1881, the Krajina was reintegrated into Croatia when the Serbs lost support from Vienna after the Turks were no longer a threat. Kaplan, 4.

16. Yugoslavia was chosen as a name that would be acceptable to both Serbs and Croats, the two main contenders for regional hegemony. Schevill, 56.

17. Ibid., 65.

18. Ibid.

19. Cuny, 5.

20. Ivo Andric, The Bridge on the Drina (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 56.

21. Ibid., 57.

22. Ibid.

23. Cuny, 6.

24. For a further explanation of the role of *begs* see Schevill, 63. Quote is also from Schevill, 63.
24. Cuny, 9.
26. Ibid.
27. Leon Trotsky, The Balkan Wars 1912-13 (New York: Monad Press, 1980), 58.
28. Ibid., 74.
29. In 1908, the protectorate of Bosnia had been annexed by Austria. Serb nationalists proclaimed the area as part of "greater Serbia", and Bosnian Serbs, who had been hopeful of joining Serbia, were especially bitter about the Austrian action. Furthermore, the Austrians created three electoral colleges, one Muslim, one Catholic, and one Orthodox. This undermined the Serbian claim that all Serbo-Croat speakers belonged to "Greater Serbia". Andric, 62.
30. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Other Balkan War, 1912 (Washington: Carnegie Press, 1993), 11.
31. Ibid., 12.
32. Cuny, 10.
33. Cuny, 12.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid, 13.
36. Andric, 66.
37. Ibid.
38. Ivo Banic, The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, and Politics (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 6.
39. Most of Bosnia-Herzegovina was allotted to the NDH. Ibid., 7.
40. From the Četas, the groups of Serbian irregulars who, intermittently throughout the centuries, fought Turkish occupation. Ibid., 8.
41. Ibid.
42. Cuny, 11.

43. The civil war continued well beyond 1944-45, albeit on a reduced scale, as Četnik forces were subdued. Mihajlović was captured in March 1946, tried for treason and shot. Banic, 9.

44. Ibid., 10.

45. Paul Shoup, Communism and the Yugoslav National Question (New York: Colombia University Press, 1968), 15.

46. There were nevertheless heavy anti-Četnik and anti-Ustaša reprisals in the postwar years. Quislings also were mercilessly hunted down. There were many abuses. Ibid., 17.

47. Ibid., 27.

48. Banic, 44.

49. Cuny, 17.

50. Notably, the Serbian Academy of Sciences in Belgrade. Shoup, 34.

51. Ibid., 45.

52. Mark Thompson, A Paper House: the Ending Of Yugoslavia (London: Vantage House, 1992), 16.

53. Ibid., 19.

54. Information provided for both preceding paragraphs, Ibid., 34.

55. Ibid., 46.

56. Cuny, 20.

57. It is also the republic where the highest proportion of inhabitants declared themselves as "Yugoslavs" (5.5 percent) in 1991. Cuny, 17.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., 18.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Technically, the Serbs had the right to veto the election since the Constitution of the (Yugoslav) Republic of Bosnia stipulated that in constitutional matters, all three nationalities must concur. Banic, 73.

63. Ibid., 78.
64. Reuters Reporter Curt Shork, interview by author, 27 April 1994, Sarajevo, notes.
65. Banic, 81.
66. United Nations Reference Paper, "The United Nations and the Situation on the Former Yugoslavia," 7 May 1993, United Nations Department of Public Information, 3.
67. The SDS leader, Radovan Karadžić, argued that the Serbs had fought two world wars on the winning side in order to ensure the security which a constitutional connection with Serbia would guarantee. Glenny, 154.
68. Cuny, 55.
69. Ibid., 16.
70. Helsinki Watch, War Crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992), 5.
71. Ibid., 10.
72. Ibid., 6.
73. Cuny, 18.
74. Ibid., 19.
75. Ibid., 23.
76. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Background Book on the Southern Slavic Region (U) (Quantico Virginia, 1994), Tab B.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Cuny, 26.
80. Ibid.
81. Milošević is only president of Serbia, not the Yugoslav Republic of Serbia and Montenegro, although 500,000 Montenegrins insist that they are linked ethnically, linguistically, and politically to Serbia. Glenny, 130-132.
82. Cuny, 29.
83. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Tab B.

84. Cuny, 25.

85. Recently, the New York Times reported that the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague was preparing indictments against Mladic and Karadzic. Roger Cohen, "C.I.A. Report Finds Serbs Guilty in Majority of Bosnia War Crimes," New York Times (9 March 1995): A1.

86. Cuny, 26.

87. In addition to the JNA forces normally stationed in B-H, there were thousands of troops that had been withdrawn from Croatia under the Vance Plan. Ibid.

88. Ibid., 27.

89. Ibid.

90. Helsinki Watch, 13.

91. Cuny, 32.

92. Cuny, 33.

93. Approximately 750,000 Croats live in Bosnia, but only 35 percent of them in Herzegovina. Only 7,300 Croats live in eastern Herzegovina. Ibid., 16.

94. In March 1991, Tujman and Serbian President Milosevic met secretly in the town of Karadjordjevo and talked about dividing Bosnia between them. Cuny, 30.

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.

97. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Tab D.

98. Tudjman supports Boban's aspirations for an independent Croatian republic in B-H but by his actions he is depopulating the Herzegovinian hinterland of Croats. Croatia has been resettling the refugees from Central Bosnia on the more remote islands of Dalmatia and Istria where Tudjman believes they will become his political supporters. In those areas, he has had little political support. Cuny, 32.

99. Ibid.

100. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Tab D.

101. Ibid.

102. In the 1960s, he was one of the youngest generals in the JNA. Ibid.

103. Once asked his wife's nationality, he answered that he thanked God that she was neither Serb nor Jewish, but a pure Croat. Cuny, 34.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid, 35.

106. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Tab D.

107. General Ante Roso, HVO Commander, interview by author, 12 May 1994, Sarajevo, notes.

108. Which closes each news report with the sign-off, "goodnight Croat fighters, wherever you are." Author's notes, 3 April 1994, Zagreb, Croatia.

109. British intelligence officer, assigned to UNPROFOR G-2, interview with author, 20 April 1994, Zagreb, Croatia, notes.

110. Cuny, 38.

111. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Tab D.

112. For a more detailed description of Roso's background, read author's Personal Experience Monogram, A Letter From Sarajevo, U.S. Army War College, May 1995.

113. A formal military alliance between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina was signed on 16 June 1992. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Tab D.

114. Cuny, 39.

115. Although called the "Croatian armed forces," they do not represent the legitimate military forces of the government of the Republic of Croatia, therefore they will only be referred to by their Croatian acronym, HOS in this text.

116. Cuny, 37.

117. The term refers to Muslims who originate from the Sandžak region of Serbia. In the early stages of the war, they were able to obtain arms from their relatives who had immigrated to Turkey, from the Communists, and Serb nationalists and came to Bosnia to help the Muslims. Glenn, 129.

118. Zihad Sisic, BiH Liaison Officer, interview by author, 1 May 1994, Sarajevo, notes.

119. Cuny, 40.
120. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Tab C.
121. Cuny, 40.
122. Ibid.
123. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Tab C.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Helsinki Watch, 16.
127. Glenny, 66.
128. Cuny, 41.
129. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, Tab C. for Halilovic and Delic.
130. There are historical reasons for this: the people who converted to Islam during the Ottoman period were largely people who were protecting their social or trading positions, or those seeking jobs in the civil administration. Thus, a high proportion of town and city dwellers were Muslim. Schevill, 96.
131. Ibid., 98.
132. Branka Magas, The Destruction of Yugoslavia (New York: Verso, 1993), 23.
133. Ibid.
134. One of the best descriptions of the situation can be found in Witness to Genocide, New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993.
135. Cuny, 47.
136. Ibid.
137. Cuny, 50.
138. At one point, during the battle for Jajce, the HVO's blockade of vital fuel and ammunition contributed directly to the Bosnian's defeat in that city. General Ante Roso, HVO commander, interview by author, 12 May 1994, Sarajevo, notes.

139. In fact, most were trying to get to the Dalmatian Coast of Croatia where many had summer cottages they hoped to live in until they could go home. When the Croatian government stopped them from leaving Bosnia, the only place they could go was Mostar. Cuny, 52.

140. Helsinki Watch, 16.

141. Ibid.

142. Robert Kaplan describes many examples of such legendary heroes in his book Balkan Ghosts, 10, 59, 150, 13, 59.

143. For an excellent discussion of this phenomenon, see "Yugoslavia's Ethnic Furies," by Cvijeto Job in Foreign Policy, 78 (Fall 1993).

144. Michael Phelps, Chief UNHCR Sarajevo, interview by author, 6 May 1994, Sarajevo, notes.

145. Ibid.

146. Cuny, 51.

147. The claims were supported by a series of pseudo-scholarly papers from the Serbian intelligentsia, most prominently an infamous "memorandum" published by the Serbian Academy of Sciences which warned of anti-Serbian conspiracies by the Vatican, the Germans, the CIA, the Albanians, NATO, the Comintern, and the Western media. Helsinki Watch, 21.

148. Banic, 66.

149. Cuny, 53.

150. Ibid.

151. Glenny, 123.

152. Ibid.

153. Ibid.

154. Curt Shork, Reuters correspondent, at a press conference in Sarajevo, 17 May 1994.

155. John Pomfret, reporter for The Washington Post, interview by author, 13 May 1994, Sarajevo, notes.

156. A BiH commander, interview by author, near Visoko, 20 May 1994, notes.

157. Cuny, 58.

158. See Roger Cohen's article "CIA Report Finds Serbs Guilty in Majority of Bosnia War Crimes," New York Times (9 March 1995): A1. In fact, the Tribunal expects to bring indictments against Karadzic and Mladic by the end of 1995.

159. British intelligence officer assigned to Bosnia-Herzegovina Command, interview by author, April 1994, notes.

160. Zihad Sisic, BiH Liaison Officer, interview by author, 8 May 1994, in Sarajevo, notes.

161. Glenny, 111.

162. Ibid.

163. Author's personal observations.

164. Cuny, 59.

165. Ibid, 60.

166. Ibid.

167. Izetbegovic actually had a map drawn up with the Bosnian partition proposal. It was immediately met with resignation from all concerned.

168. Sabrina Ramet, "The Bosnian War and the Diplomacy of Accomodation," Current History, (November 1994), 383.

169. David Gompert, "How to Defeat Serbia," Foreign Affairs, 73 (July/August 1994), 34.

170. There is also the problem of setting a precedent that makes it harder to enforce embargoes in other locales such as the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

171. Cuny, 53.

172. This was a major problem in Afghanistan; after the Soviets were defeated, the well-armed *Mujahidin* began fighting among themselves.

173. This opinion was expressed by members of the SHAPE staff, visiting Sarajevo, 6 May 1994, notes.

174. Discussion with NATO representatives during SACEUR's visit to Sarajevo, 6 May 1994, notes.

175. John Pomfret, "Croatia Seeks Talks to Ease Relations with Yugoslavia," Washington Post, 24 January 1995, p.13.

176. Sonni Efron, "Kremlin Has Its Hands Full in Chechnya," Los Angeles Times, 20 January, 1995. p.2.

177. The location of the war, i.e., the crossroads of eastern and western Europe, puts it in a particularly dangerous spot. There are many other conflicts nearby -- in Georgia, Armenia, Chechnya, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and the Middle East -- and many of the former Communist countries in the region are unstable.

178. Fred Cuny, American humanitarian aid expert now missing in Chechnya, interview by author, 20 May 1994, Sarajevo, notes.

179. Tetsuya Sahara, "The Islamic World and the Bosnian Crisis," Current History, 93 (November 1994), 387.

180. Curt Shork, reporter for Reuters, interview by author, 3 May 1994, Sarajevo, notes.

181. United Nations Charter, Chapter VI.

182. Douglas T. Stuart, Can Europe Survive Maastricht? (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 1994), 30.

183. See author's Personal Experience Monogram, A Letter From Sarajevo, U.S. Army War College, May 1995, for a detailed account of conversations between Lieutenant General Michael Rose and various U.S. visitors to Bosnia-Herzegovina Command.

184. United Nations Information Paper, UNPROFOR Office of Public Information, March 1994.

185. Author's telephone conversations with members of the EUCOM J-3 staff, May 1994, Sarajevo, notes.

186. Ibid.

187. Author's conversations with AFSOUTH, and UNHCR and other humanitarian aid officials, June 1994, Sarajevo, notes.

188. Notably, Fred Cuny and Michael Phelps.

189. Cuny, 64.

190. Bosnia-Herzegovina Command intelligence (G-2) assessment, May 1994, notes.

191. Gompert, 36.

192. Ibid., 45.

193. Cuny, 69.

194. Ibid.

195. Nicholas Lang, a U.S. staff representative to NATO, in Sarajevo, interview by author, 18 May 1994, notes.

196. Consider the London Blitz and the defiance of the British or the fact that the Allied "Thousand Plane Raids" continued up to the end of the war without breaking the morale of the Germans.

197. A position held by many senior officers at Joint Task Force Provide Promise, in June 1994.

198. Ibid.

199. General Lewis MacKenzie, Peacekeeper, The Road to Sarajevo (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1993) 333.

200. Hans Binnendijk and Jeffrey Simon, "Preventing A Sixth Twentieth-Century Balkan War," Strategic Forum 9 (October 1994): 155.

201. See editorial "To Save What's Left of Bosnia", Washington Post, 1 December 1994, p.22.

202. This approach was discussed informally between Bosnia-Herzegovina Command and JTF Provide Promise staff officers in Sarajevo, in June 1994.

203. That they haven't yet come to a final resolution should not be seen as a failure of the operation.

204. Mark Brilliant, et al. "Humanitarian Intervention: The Military, Political and Humanitarian Lessons of Operation Provide Comfort," Dallas: INTERTECT, 1993.

205. Discussion with several Somalia veterans at the U.S. Army War College, January 1995, notes.

206. In fact, Zimmerman was urging the Administration to condemn the Serbs and press for a UN peacekeeping force. But, by his own admission he didn't press hard enough. Warren Zimmerman, "Origins of a Catastrophe: Memoirs of the Last American Ambassador to Yugoslavia," Foreign Affairs 74 (March/April 1995): 20.

207. Ibid.

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